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In thy most need to go by thy side.

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NEW YORK

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FICTION

THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO
BY ANN RADCLIFFE · INTRODUC-
TION BY R. AUSTIN FREEMAN
IN 2 VOLS. VOL. I

ANN RADCLIFFE, *née* Ward, born in London in 1764. Her first work was published in 1789. Died in 1823.

THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO
VOLUME ONE



ANN RADCLIFFE

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NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC.

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at The Temple Press Letchworth
and decorated by Eric Ravilious
for*

J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.

Aldine House Bedford St. London

Toronto . . . Vancouver

Melbourne . . . Wellington

First Published in this Edition 1931

INTRODUCTION

SPEAKING in rather wide terms one might be tempted to regard a novel as a work produced principally for consumption by the writer's contemporaries. Indeed, the name implies a quality so ephemeral in its appeal as almost to justify the assertion, by a well-known publisher, that the life of the average modern novel is no longer than that of a monthly magazine. The word "average," however, introduces a qualification of profound significance. For to the rule above stated there are exceptions; and the exceptions are so many that the rule tends to disappear. While last year's novel may be as dead as the *Deinotherium*, stories are still living and fresh which were popular in the Bronze Age. Boccaccio, Marguerite of Navarre, and our own jovial Chaucer have more readers to-day than they had when their works were fresh from the scrivener's pen; while the stories of Defoe, Fielding, and Smollett, of Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, and the great Victorians enjoy an evergreen popularity.

The truth is that the law of the survival of the fittest operates in the world of letters even as it does in that of organic life, though not with the same infallibility; for in the former it is subject to the disturbing influence of human judgment. Doubtless, many a masterpiece has perished in manuscript, its quality unrecognized by those through whose hands it has passed, even as others, which now live as classics, have, by bare chance, reached the printer, faded and in tatters, after interminable wanderings and countless rejections; while, among those actually published, many a one which deserved a better fate must have been swept away into oblivion by the torrent of new publications.

The disturbing influence, however, operates only in one direction. If faulty judgment has allowed some works of genius to perish in their birth, it has been unable to preserve the lives of the literary unfit. Survival of a book—its real survival in an active living form—over a considerable period of years, is incontestable evidence of outstanding

quality. Only by virtue of its inherent excellence could it have been able successfully to compete with its innumerable successors.

The triumph of these hardy survivors from the past is the greater since they suffer, in comparison with their modern competitors, from certain obvious disadvantages. To say nothing of the difficulty of establishing a sympathetic relationship between writer and reader when these are creatures of totally different environments, widely unlike in habits and outlook, there are certain changes in style and manner which give an advantage to the modern. For, apart from mere fashion, the art of the story-teller has undergone a progressive development in technique which has been mostly in the direction of improvement; so that we may probably say with truth that the best fiction of our own time is, in technical execution, better than that of any former age.

This is not the place in which to enter into an elaborate examination of the changes by which the modern type of novel has been evolved; but we may, perhaps, glance at one or two of the more salient differences between the old and the new. We may note, for instance, that, whereas the earlier story-teller was usually content to tell his story simply by direct narration, with little, if any, use of dialogue, the modern tends to allow, not merely events, but also personal character and implied description, to transpire through the speech of the characters. More and more, passages of formal description and even of direct narrative, tend to be suppressed in favour of dialogue; there is a conscious aim at conciseness and economy of words, which is all to the good when not accompanied by a corresponding economy of matter. As a result, the modern novel is on a much more modest scale as to length than its predecessors; but it is doubtful whether this quality can be ascribed to improved technique. We may suspect that the brevity of contemporary works of fiction is more appreciated by the publisher, who pays the printer's bill, than by the reader. Finally, in fiction which deals with periods which are not those of the writers, we notice in the modern a striving after realism, an effort to secure the atmosphere of the period and an anxious care for correctness of setting and accessories—qualities to which the early story-teller was as indifferent as was the painter who peopled his Crucifixion scenes with friars, abbots, and medieval knights.

But when all is said, technical methods are of but secondary importance. The story is the thing. Indeed, if the story is good enough, a certain antique flavour in the diction and manner is but an added charm which yields an aesthetic satisfaction analagous to that which we derive from the pleasant "old face" type of a seventeenth-century book. This is the feeling that we have as we pursue our way through the spacious pages of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. For here the indispensable condition is fulfilled. The story is good enough to stand on its own merits, independent alike of extrinsic graces or shortcomings.

Compared with the works of our own times, this is a book of somewhat heroic dimensions, containing some three hundred thousand words, and being, therefore, equal in length to three good-sized modern novels. Yet, in spite of its bulk, there is a total absence of any tendency to "padding." The narrative pursues its quiet, leisurely way, after the dignified fashion of the time, but without prolixity or verbosity. The persons and the scenes are duly introduced to the reader in the opening pages with a careful formality of detail that contrasts strongly with the way in which some modern authors blunder into the midst of what is to the reader an unknown environment. There is much more description, especially of scenery, than would be thought admissible in modern work. But it is excellent description, strictly relevant to the action, and designed to create the desired atmosphere; and in many instances—as, for example, in the fine descriptive passages which illustrate the thrilling adventures of the heroine and her friends among the smugglers and bandits in a pass of the Pyrenees—the description of the background of the action is essential to, and inseparable from, the action itself.

As to the "period" atmosphere, the reader must pass over it as lightly as the author has done. It is of little consequence, for this makes no claim to be an historical novel; it is a story of mystery and stirring incident. For some reason, the author made the period the late sixteenth century—the story opens in the year 1584—but she is at no trouble to insist on it. The heroine, Emily St. Aubert, is surprisingly like a young English lady of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and the atmosphere in general is more like that of the eighteenth than the sixteenth century. There occur, too, certain little anachronisms in connection with the accessories, or "pro-

perties." But these, even if they do not pass unobserved, will not trouble the reader; nor will he be seriously disturbed by encountering nuns, companionably perambulating the corridors of monasteries, or by discovering a Father Superior and a Lady Abbess presiding over their respective departments in the same institution.

Having regard to the great vogue which the mystery story has enjoyed during the last few years, and which still seems to be growing, it may be of interest to consider how this, which is professedly a mystery story, compares with modern examples of this type. This raises the question, What are the essential qualities that go to the making of a good mystery story? And it is a question to which the answer is fairly obvious. The two elements, the puzzle and its solution, must each be dealt with completely and satisfactorily. The circumstances of mystery must be such as to catch the attention of the reader and arouse his curiosity, to hold him in suspense and expectation, and lead him to speculate on possible explanations; and while, on the one hand, baffling his attempts to reason out a solution, shall not be—at least theoretically—beyond the powers of human intelligence to solve. Then, when at last the solution is produced, it must be a real and undeniable solution. It must not be merely plausible; it must be so completely convincing that the reader's only dissatisfaction will be with his own lack of perspicacity in having failed to unravel the tangle.

Now of these two structural parts of a mystery story, the first is easy enough. It is in the solution of the mystery, not in the mystery itself, that the constructive powers of the writer are made manifest. The solution is at once the main difficulty and the test of quality. Many an inexperienced author, misled by the ease with which circumstances of the most profoundly mysterious character can be invented, has embarked gaily on a story of this type, intent only on bewildering the reader and inflaming his curiosity; piling mystery on mystery even unto physical impossibility, only to find himself, when the day of reckoning came with the final chapter, hard put to it to solve his own problems and reduced ignominiously to an attempt to fob off on the disappointed and exasperated reader explanations which manifestly fail to account for the alleged facts and solutions which themselves require to be solved.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* there is nothing of this kind. The mysteries, indeed, are calculated most thoroughly to puzzle the reader and arouse in him a lively curiosity. Some of the incidents appear to be totally incredible and outside the limits of natural possibility. Nevertheless, when the explanations are given, the reader is able at once to accept them as satisfying and conclusive. And it must be set down as greatly to the author's credit that, unlike some of her contemporaries, she resisted the temptation to make her path easy by recourse to the supernatural. Even the most wildly improbable of the events so vividly described are eventually seen to be in full accordance with the order of nature.

If we wished to be critical, we might, perhaps, demur to some of the methods by which the mystery is maintained; particularly to the practice of withholding from the reader what are admittedly observed facts, and permitting him only to perceive their emotional effects. This occurs on two occasions, and in neither instance does it appear necessary or justifiable. In the first, Emily St. Aubert, while engaged in destroying, in obedience to her late father's solemn injunctions, some of his papers, unconsciously glances at an open page, and, before she is aware, has read "a sentence of dreadful import." That is all that the reader is told; and though the incident is frequently referred to subsequently, and it is clear that it has an important bearing on the plot, the matter of the sentence is never disclosed.

This, one feels, is false construction. The convention of the mystery story assumes that whatever is consciously seen by the character is seen by the reader. It is for the author so to arrange matters that the thing seen shall give no more information than is intended. But the second instance is even less excusable. Here Emily, exploring a forbidden chamber in the castle of Udolpho, decides to examine the "veiled picture," of which she has been told; but no sooner has she lifted the veil than she lets it fall—"perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture"—and, in accordance with her somewhat reprehensible habit, falls senseless on the floor. But what the veil had concealed, the reader is not informed until the end of the book. Yet this secrecy on the part of the author is quite unnecessary; for it is made clear, when explanations are forthcoming, that Emily's emotion was

due to a misapprehension as to what she had seen. But this misapprehension could easily and properly have been passed on to the reader, since the convention assumes that he sees with the character's eyes; and thus the information could have been withheld without resorting to this artificial and unsatisfactory device.

Nevertheless, and this criticism notwithstanding, all the mysteries are, in the end, completely and convincingly cleared up, and the reader closes the book with the feeling that he has been honestly dealt with, and that all doubtful matters have been disposed of to his satisfaction.

It remains to say a few words about the lady who gave so much pleasure to her contemporaries and who continues to furnish entertainment in a world so different from that in which she lived.

Ann Radcliffe was born in London on the 9th of July, 1764. Her father, William Ward, was in trade, but the connections on both sides seem to have been with the professions, for while her father was related to William Cheselden, the eminent surgeon, her mother was a niece of Dr. Samuel Jebb and first cousin to Sir Richard Jebb, physician to the king, George III. She appears, during her girlhood, to have moved in society of a somewhat literary character, and at the age of twenty-three she married William Radcliffe, a law student, who eventually abandoned his legal career to become proprietor and editor of the *English Chronicle*.

Mrs. Radcliffe's literary activities covered a comparatively brief period, for her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, appeared in 1789, while her last—and probably her best work—*The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents*, a story of the Inquisition, was published in 1797. She did, indeed, write yet another book after this—a novel entitled *Gaston de Blondville, or the Court of Henry III keeping Festival in Ardenne*. But as this was written in 1802 and not published until 1826, three years after her death, we may assume that she did not regard it as up to the standard of the best of her work; and this seems the more probable, since from this date she wrote no more fiction. Apparently, with rather unusual wisdom, she elected to bring her literary career to an end while her reputation was at its height.

It is, however, possible that her very definite retirement from the world of letters may have been, to some extent, due

to declining health; for she suffered severely, during the last twelve years of her life, from the distressing complaint—spasmodic asthma—which eventually caused her rather sudden death. She died on the 7th of February, 1823, and was buried at the Chapel-of-ease in the Bayswater Road, belonging to St. George's, Hanover Square; where also lie Laurence Sterne and that admirable water-colour artist and engraver, Paul Sandby.

She appears to have been very warmly appreciated by her contemporaries. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* not only enjoyed great popularity in this country but was, by Chastenay, translated into French. Its success was so great that the author obtained for its successor the then very large sum of eight hundred pounds. An edition of her novels appeared in 1824, with a preface by Sir Walter Scott, which on the whole, confirmed the highly favourable estimate of the critics of the time as to the author's talents and the merits of her work. It should be added, however, that this favourable opinion had reference to her prose works rather than to her verses; and it is probable that modern readers of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* may feel a similar qualified appreciation of the poems which make their somewhat intrusive appearance in the body of the narrative.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

28th November, 1930.

The works published by Ann Radcliffe during her brief literary career comprised six novels—one published posthumously—and one descriptive work. The list is as follows:

The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, 1789.

A Sicilian Romance (1790?).

The Romance of the Forest, 1791. This reached a fourth edition in 1795, and was translated into French and Italian. A dramatized version—*Fountainville Forest*—by John Boaden, appeared in 1794.

The Mysteries of Udolpho, 1794.

The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents, 1797. Dramatized by Boaden under the title of *The Italian Monk* and produced at the Haymarket Theatre in August 1797. Translated into French by the Abbé Morellet.

Gaston de Blondville, or the Court of Henry III keeping Festival in Ardenne, 1826. Translated into French by Defauconpret in 1826.

A Journey made in the Summer of 1794 through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany. Published in 1795.

A long metrical romance entitled *St. Alban's Abbey*, though never published separately, was incorporated into an introductory memoir which was prefixed to the posthumous novel, *Gaston de Blondville*.

Further information respecting Mrs. Radcliffe and her works is to be found in the Introduction by Sir Walter Scott to the edition of her novels in Ballantynes Novelists' Library, 1824; in Jeaffreson's *Novels and Novelists*; in Alibone's *Dictionary of English Literature*; in Chambers's *Cyclopædia of English Literature*; in Lefèvre-Deumier's *Célébrités Anglaises*, 1895; *The Supernatural in Modern Fiction*, by D. Scarborough, 1917; *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time*, by C. F. MacIntyre, 1920; and in E. Birkhead's *The Tale of Terror*, 1921.

PART I

CHAPTER I

. . . Home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polish'd friends
And dear relations mingle into bliss.

THOMSON.

ON the pleasant banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood, in the year 1584, the château of Monsieur St. Aubert. From its windows were seen the pastoral landscapes of Guienne and Gascony stretching along the river, gay with luxuriant woods and vine, and plantations of olives. To the south, the view was bounded by the majestic Pyrenees, whose summits veiled in clouds, or exhibiting awful forms, seen, and lost again, as the partial vapours rolled along, were sometimes barren, and gleamed through the blue tinge of air, and sometimes frowned with forests of gloomy pine, that swept downward to their base. These tremendous precipices were contrasted by the soft green of the pastures and woods that hung upon their skirts; among whose flocks and herds and simple cottages, the eye, after having scaled the cliffs above, delighted to repose. To the north, and to the east, the plains of Guienne and Languedoc were lost in the mist of distance: on the west, Gascony was bounded by the waters of Biscay.

M. St. Aubert loved to wander, with his wife and daughter, on the margin of the Garonne, and to listen to the music that floated on its waves. He had known life in other forms than those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world; but the flattering portrait of mankind which his heart had delineated in early youth, his experience had too sorrowfully corrected. Yet, amidst the changing visions of life, his principles remained unshaken, his benevolence unchilled; and he retired from the multitude, more in *pity* than in anger, to scenes of simple nature, to the pure delights of literature, and to the exercise of domestic virtues.

He was a descendant from the younger branch of an illustrious family, and it was designed that the deficiency of his

patrimonial wealth should be supplied either by a splendid alliance in marriage, or by success in the intrigues of public affairs. But St. Aubert had too nice a sense of honour to fulfil the latter hope, and too small a portion of ambition to sacrifice what he called happiness to the attainment of wealth. After the death of his father he married a very amiable woman, his equal in birth, and not his superior in fortune. The late Monsieur St. Aubert's liberality, or extravagance, had so much involved his affairs, that his son found it necessary to dispose of a part of the family domain; and some years after his marriage he sold it to Monsieur Quesnel, the brother of his wife, and retired to a small estate in Gascony, where conjugal felicity and parental duties divided his attention with the treasures of knowledge and the illuminations of genius.

To this spot he had been attached from his infancy. He had often made excursions to it when a boy; and the impression of delight given to his mind by the homely kindness of the grey-headed peasant to whom it was entrusted, and whose fruit and cream never failed, had not been obliterated by succeeding circumstances. The green pastures, along which he had so often bounded in the exultation of health and youthful freedom—the woods, under whose refreshing shade he had first indulged that pensive melancholy which afterwards made a strong feature of his character—the wild walks of the mountains, the river, on whose waves he had floated, and the distant plains, which seemed boundless as his early hopes—were never after remembered by St. Aubert but with enthusiasm and regret. At length he disengaged himself from the world, and retired hither, to realize the wishes of many years.

The building, as it then stood, was merely a summer cottage, rendered interesting to a stranger by its neat simplicity, or the beauty of the surrounding scene; and considerable additions were necessary to make it a comfortable family residence. St. Aubert felt a kind of affection for every part of the fabric, which he remembered in his youth, and would not suffer a stone of it to be removed; so that the new building, adapted to the style of the old one, formed with it only a simple and elegant residence. The taste of Madame St. Aubert was conspicuous in its internal finishing, where the same chaste simplicity was observable in the furniture, and in the few ornaments of the apartments that characterized the manners of its inhabitants.

The library occupied the west side of the château, and was enriched by a collection of the best books in the ancient and

modern languages. This room opened upon a grove which stood on the brow of a gentle declivity, that fell towards the river, and the tall trees gave it a melancholy and pleasing shade; while from the windows the eye caught, beneath the spreading branches, the gay and luxuriant landscape stretching to the west, and overlooked on the left by the bold precipices of the Pyrenees. Adjoining the library was a greenhouse stored with scarce and beautiful plants; for one of the amusements of St. Aubert was the study of botany: and among the neighbouring mountains, which afforded a luxurious feast to the mind of the naturalist, he often passed the day in the pursuit of his favourite science. He was sometimes accompanied in these little excursions by Madame St. Aubert, and frequently by his daughter; when, with a small osier basket to receive plants, and another filled with cold refreshments, such as the cabin of the shepherd did not afford, they wandered away among the most romantic and magnificent scenes, nor suffered the charms of Nature's lowly children to abstract them from the observance of her stupendous works. When weary of sauntering among cliffs that seemed scarcely accessible but to the steps of the enthusiast, and where no track appeared on the vegetation, but what the foot of the izard had left, they would seek one of those green recesses which so beautifully adorn the bosom of these mountains; where, under the shade of the lofty larch or cedar, they enjoyed their simple repast, made sweeter by the waters of the cool stream that crept along the turf, and by the breath of wild flowers and aromatic plants that fringed the rocks and inlaid the grass.

Adjoining the eastern side of the greenhouse, looking towards the plains of Languedoc, was a room which Emily called hers, and which contained her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants. Here she usually exercised herself in elegant arts, cultivated only because they were congenial to her taste, and in which native genius, assisted by the instructions of Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert, made her an early proficient. The windows of this room were particularly pleasant; they descended to the floor, and, opening upon the little lawn that surrounded the house, the eye was led between groves of almond, palm-trees, flowering-ash, and myrtle, to the distant landscape, where the Garonne wandered.

The peasants of this gay climate were often seen on an evening, when the day's labour was done, dancing in groups on the margin of the river. Their sprightly melodies, *débonnaire* steps,

the fanciful figure of their dances, with the tasteful and capricious manner in which the girls adjusted their simple dress, gave a character to the scene entirely French.

The front of the château, which, having a southern aspect, opened upon the grandeur of the mountains, was occupied on the ground-floor by a rustic hall and two excellent sitting-rooms. The first floor, for the cottage had no second story, was laid out in bed-chambers, except one apartment that opened to a balcony, and which was generally used for a breakfast-room.

In the surrounding ground St. Aubert had made very tasteful improvements; yet such was his attachment to objects he had remembered from his boyish days, that he had in some instances sacrificed taste to sentiment. There were two old larches that shaded the building, and interrupted the prospect: St. Aubert had sometimes declared that he believed he should have been weak enough to have wept at their fall. In addition to these larches he planted a little grove of beech, pine, and mountain-ash. On a lofty terrace, formed by the swelling bank of the river, rose a plantation of orange, lemon, and palm trees, whose fruit in the coolness of evening breathed delicious fragrance. With these were mingled a few trees of other species. Here, under the ample shade of a plane-tree, that spread its majestic canopy towards the river, St. Aubert loved to sit in the fine evenings of summer, with his wife and children, watching beneath its foliage the setting sun, the mild splendour of its light fading from the distant landscape, till the shadows of twilight melted its various features into one tint of sober grey. Here, too, he loved to read, and converse with Madame St. Aubert; or to play with his children, resigning himself to the influence of those sweet affections which are ever attendant on simplicity and nature. He has often said, while tears of pleasure trembled in his eyes, that these were moments infinitely more delightful than any passed amid the brilliant and tumultuous scenes that are courted by the world. His heart was occupied; it had, what can be so rarely said, no wish for a happiness beyond what it experienced. The consciousness of acting right diffused a serenity over his manners, which nothing else could impart to a man of moral perceptions like his, and which refined his sense of every surrounding blessing.

The deepest shade of twilight did not send him from his favourite plane-tree. He loved the soothing hour, when the last tints of light die away; when the stars, one by one, tremble through ether, and are reflected on the dark mirror of the waters;

that hour which, of all others, inspires the mind with pensive tenderness, and often elevates it to sublime contemplation. When the moon shed her soft rays among the foliage, he still lingered, and his pastoral supper of cream and fruits was often spread beneath it. Then, on the stillness of night, came the song of the nightingale breathing sweetness, awaking melancholy.

The first interruptions to the happiness he had known since his retirement, were occasioned by the death of his two sons. He lost them at the age when infantine simplicity is so fascinating; and though, in consideration of Madame St. Aubert's distress, he restrained the expression of his own, and endeavoured to bear it, as he meant, with philosophy, he had, in truth, no philosophy that could render him calm to such losses. One daughter was now his only surviving child; and while he watched the unfolding of her infant character with anxious fondness, he endeavoured with unremitting effort to counteract those traits in her disposition which might hereafter lead her from happiness. She had discovered in her early years uncommon delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence; but with these was observable a degree of susceptibility too exquisite to admit of lasting peace. As she advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and a softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty, and rendered her a very interesting object to persons of a congenial disposition. But St. Aubert had too much good sense to prefer a charm to a virtue; and had penetration enough to see that this charm was too dangerous to its possessor to be allowed the character of a blessing. He endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to inure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look with cool examination upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way. While he instructed her to resist first impressions, and to acquire that steady dignity of mind that can alone counterbalance the passions, and bear us, as far as is compatible with our nature, above the reach of circumstances, he taught himself a lesson of fortitude; for he was often obliged to witness, with seeming indifference, the tears and struggles which his caution occasioned her.

In person, Emily resembled her mother; having the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes full of tender sweetness. But lovely as was her person, it was the varied expression of her countenance, as

conversation awakened the nicer emotions of her mind, that threw such a captivating grace around her:

Those tenderer tints, that shun the careless eye,
And in the world's contagious circle die.

St. Aubert cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences, and an exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature. He taught her Latin and English, chiefly that she might understand the sublimity of their best poets. She discovered in her early years a taste for works of genius; and it was St. Aubert's principle, as well as his inclination, to promote every innocent means of happiness. A well-informed mind, he would say, is the best security against the contagion of folly and of vice. The vacant mind is ever on the watch for relief, and ready to plunge into error to escape from the languor of idleness. Store it with ideas, teach it the pleasure of thinking; and the temptations of the world without will be counteracted by the gratifications derived from the world within. Thought and cultivation are necessary equally to the happiness of a country and a city life; in the first they prevent the uneasy sensations of indolence, and afford a sublime pleasure in the taste they create for the beautiful and the grand; in the latter they make dissipation less an object of necessity, and consequently of interest.

It was one of Emily's earliest pleasures to ramble among the scenes of nature; nor was it in the soft and glowing landscape that she most delighted; she loved more the wild wood walks that skirted the mountain; and still more the mountain's stupendous recesses, where the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a sacred awe upon her heart, and lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. In scenes like these she would often linger alone, wrapt in a melancholy charm, till the last gleam of day faded from the west; till the lonely sound of a sheep-bell, or the distant bark of a watch-dog, were all that broke the stillness of the evening. Then, the gloom of the woods; the trembling of their leaves, at intervals, in the breeze; the bat, flitting in the twilight; the cottage-lights, now seen and now lost—were circumstances that awakened her mind into effort, and led to enthusiasm and poetry.

Her favourite walk was to a little fishing-house belonging to St. Aubert, in a woody glen, on the margin of a rivulet that descended from the Pyrenees, and, after foaming among their rocks, wound its silent way beneath the shades it reflected.

Above the woods that screened this glen rose the lofty summits of the Pyrenees, which often burst boldly on the eye through the glades below. Sometimes the shattered face of a rock only was seen, crowned with wild shrubs; or a shepherd's cabin seated on a cliff, overshadowed by dark cypress or waving ash. Emerging from the deep recesses of the woods, the glade opened to the distant landscape, where the rich pastures and vine-covered slopes of Gascony gradually declined to the plains; and there, on the winding shores of the Garonne, groves, and hamlets, and villas—their outlines softened by distance—melted from the eye into one rich harmonious tint.

This, too, was the favourite retreat of St. Aubert, to which he frequently withdrew from the fervour of noon, with his wife, his daughter, and his books; or came at the sweet evening hour to welcome the silent dusk, or to listen for the music of the nightingale. Sometimes, too, he brought music of his own, and awakened every fair echo with the tender accents of his oboe; and often have the tones of Emily's voice drawn sweetness from the waves over which they trembled.

It was in one of these excursions to this spot that she observed the following lines written with a pencil on a part of the wainscot:

SONNET

Go, pencil! faithful to thy master's sighs!
 Go—tell the Goddess of the fairy scene,
 When next her light steps wind these wood-walks green,
 Whence all his tears his tender sorrows rise;

Ah! paint her form, her soul-illuminated eyes,
 The sweet expression of her pensive face,
 The light'ning smile, the animated grace—
 The portrait well the lover's voice supplies;

Speaks all his heart must feel, his tongue would say:
 Yet, ah! not all his heart must sadly feel!
 How oft the floweret's silken leaves conceal
 The drug that steals the vital spark away!

And who that gazes on that angel-smile,
 Would fear its charm, or think it could beguile!

These lines were not inscribed to any person; Emily therefore could not apply them to herself, though she was undoubtedly the nymph of these shades. Having glanced round the little circle of her acquaintance without being detained by a suspicion as to whom they could be addressed, she was compelled to rest

in uncertainty; an uncertainty which would have been more painful to an idle mind than it was to hers. She had no leisure to suffer this circumstance, trifling at first, to swell into importance by frequent remembrance: the little vanity it had excited (for the incertitude which forbade her to presume upon having inspired the sonnet, forbade her also to disbelieve it), passed away, and the incident was dismissed from her thoughts amid her books, her studies, and the exercise of social charities.

Soon after this period her anxiety was awakened by the indisposition of her father, who was attacked with a fever; which, though not thought to be of a dangerous kind, gave a severe shock to his constitution. Madame St. Aubert and Emily attended him with unremitting care; but his recovery was very slow, and, as he advanced towards health, Madame seemed to decline.

The first scene he visited, after he was well enough to take the air, was his favourite fishing-house. A basket of provisions was sent thither, with books, and Emily's lute; for fishing-tackle he had no use, for he never could find amusement in torturing or destroying.

After employing himself for about an hour in botanizing, dinner was served. It was a repast to which gratitude for being again permitted to visit this spot gave sweetness; and family happiness once more smiled beneath these shades. Monsieur St. Aubert conversed with usual cheerfulness; every object delighted his senses. The refreshing pleasure from the first view of nature, after the pain of illness and the confinement of a sick chamber, is above the conceptions, as well as the descriptions, of those in health. The green woods and pastures; the flowery turf; the balmy air; the murmur of the limpid stream; and even the hum of every little insect of the shade, seemed to revivify the soul, and make mere existence bliss.

Madame St. Aubert, reanimated by the cheerfulness and the recovery of her husband, was no longer sensible of the indisposition which had lately oppressed her; and, as she sauntered along the wood-walks of this romantic glen, and conversed with him and with her daughter, she often looked at them alternately with a degree of tenderness that filled her eyes with tears. St. Aubert observed this more than once, and gently reproved her for the emotion; but she could only smile, clasp his hand and that of Emily, and weep the more. He felt the tender enthusiasm stealing upon himself in a degree that became almost painful; his features assumed a serious air, and he could not

forbear secretly sighing, "Perhaps I shall some time look back to these moments, with hopeless regret. But let me not misuse them by useless anticipation; let me hope I shall not live to mourn the loss of those who are dearer to me than life."

To relieve, or perhaps to indulge, the pensive temper of his mind, he bade Emily fetch the lute she knew how to touch with such sweet pathos. As she drew near the fishing-house, she was surprised to hear the tones of the instrument, which were awakened by the hand of taste, and uttered a plaintive air, whose exquisite melody engaged all her attention. She listened in profound silence, afraid to move from the spot, lest the sound of her steps should occasion her to lose a note of the music, or should disturb the musician. Everything without the building was still, and no person appeared. She continued to listen, till timidity succeeded to surprise and delight; a timidity increased by a remembrance of the pencilled lines she had formerly seen, and she hesitated whether to proceed or to return.

While she paused, the music ceased; and after a momentary hesitation she re-collected courage to advance to the fishing-house, which she entered with faltering steps, and found unoccupied! Her lute lay on the table; everything seemed undisturbed, and she began to believe it was another instrument she had heard, till she remembered that when she followed Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert from this spot her lute was left on the window-seat. She felt alarmed, she knew not wherefore; the melancholy gloom of evening, and the profound stillness of the place, interrupted only by the light trembling of leaves, heightened her fanciful apprehensions, and she was desirous of quitting the building, but perceived herself grow faint, and sat down. As she tried to recover herself, the pencilled lines on the wainscot met her eye; she started as if she had seen a stranger; but endeavouring to conquer the tremor of her spirits, rose and went to the window. To the lines before noticed she now perceived that others were added, in which her name appeared.

Though no longer suffered to doubt that they were addressed to herself, she was as ignorant as before by whom they could be written. While she mused, she thought she heard the sound of a step without the building; and again alarmed, she caught up her lute and hurried away. Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert she found in a little path that wound along the sides of the glen.

Having reached a green summit, shadowed by palm-trees and overlooking the valleys and plains of Gascony, they seated

themselves on the turf; and while their eyes wandered over the glorious scene, and they inhaled the sweet breath of flowers and herbs that enriched the grass, Emily played and sung several of their favourite airs, with the delicacy of expression in which she so much excelled.

Music and conversation detained them in this enchanting spot till the sun's last light slept upon the plains; till the white sails that glided beneath the mountains, where the Garonne wandered, became dim, and the gloom of evening stole over the landscape. It was a melancholy but not unpleasing gloom. St. Aubert and his family rose, and left the place with regret: alas! Madame St. Aubert knew not that she left it for ever.

When they reached the fishing-house she missed her bracelet, and recollected that she had taken it from her arm after dinner, and had left it on the table when she went to walk. After a long search, in which Emily was very active, she was compelled to resign herself to the loss of it. What made this bracelet valuable to her, was a miniature of her daughter to which it was attached, esteemed a striking resemblance, and which had been painted only a few months before. When Emily was convinced that the bracelet was really gone, she blushed, and became thoughtful. That some stranger had been in the fishing-house during her absence, her lute and the additional lines of a pencil already informed her. From the purport of these lines it was not unreasonable to believe that the poet, the musician, and the thief were the same person. But though the music she had heard, the written lines she had seen, and the disappearance of the picture, formed a combination of circumstances very remarkable, she was irresistibly restrained from mentioning them; secretly determining, however, never again to visit the fishing-house without Monsieur or Madame St. Aubert.

They returned pensively to the château, Emily musing on the incident which had just occurred; St. Aubert reflecting with placid gratitude on the blessings he possessed; and Madame St. Aubert somewhat disturbed and perplexed by the loss of her daughter's picture. As they drew near the house they observed an unusual bustle about it; the sound of voices was distinctly heard; servants and horses were seen passing between the trees; and at length the wheels of a carriage rolled along. Having come within view of the front of the château, a landau with smoking horses appeared on the little lawn before it. St. Aubert perceived the liveries of his brother-in-law, and in the parlour he found Monsieur and Madame Quesnel already entered.

They had left Paris some days before, and were on the way to their estate, only ten leagues distant from La Vallée, and which Monsieur Quesnel had purchased several years before of St. Aubert. This gentleman was the only brother of Madame St. Aubert; but the ties of relationship having never been strengthened by congeniality of character, the intercourse between them had not been frequent. M. Quesnel had lived altogether in the world: his aim had been consequence; splendour was the object of his taste; and his address and knowledge of character had carried him forward to the attainment of almost all that he had courted. By a man of such a disposition, it is not surprising that the virtues of St. Aubert should be overlooked; or that his pure taste, simplicity, and moderated wishes were considered as marks of a weak intellect and of confined views. The marriage of his sister with St. Aubert had been mortifying to his ambition; for he had designed that the matrimonial connection she formed should assist him to attain the consequence which he so much desired; and some offers were made her by persons whose rank and fortune flattered his warmest hope. But his sister, who was then addressed also by St. Aubert, perceived, or thought she perceived, that happiness and splendour were not the same; and she did not hesitate to forgo the last for the attainment of the former. Whether Monsieur Quesnel thought them the same or not, he would readily have sacrificed his sister's peace to the gratification of his own ambition; and, on her marriage with St. Aubert, expressed in private his contempt of her spiritless conduct, and of the connection which it permitted. Madame St. Aubert, though she concealed this insult from her husband, felt, perhaps for the first time, resentment lighted in her heart; and though a regard for her own dignity, united with considerations of prudence, restrained her expression of this resentment, there was ever after a mild reserve in her manner towards M. Quesnel, which he both understood and felt.

In his own marriage he did not follow his sister's example. His lady was an Italian, and an heiress, by birth; and, by nature and education, was a vain and frivolous woman.

They now determined to pass the night with St. Aubert; and as the château was not large enough to accommodate their servants, the latter were dismissed to the neighbouring village. When the first compliments were over, and the arrangements for the night made, M. Quesnel began the display of his intelligence and connexions; while St. Aubert, who had been long enough in retirement to find these topics recommended by their

"It will certainly come down," said M. Quesnel: "I believe I shall plant some Lombardy poplars among the clumps of chestnut that I shall leave of the avenue: Madame Quesnel is partial to the poplar, and tells me how much it adorns a villa of her uncle not far from Venice."

"On the banks of the Brenta, indeed!" continued St. Aubert, "where its spiry form is intermingled with the pine and the cypress, and where it plays over light and elegant porticoes and colonnades, it unquestionably adorns the scene; but among the giants of the forest, and near a heavy Gothic mansion——"

"Well, my good sir," said M. Quesnel, "I will not dispute with you; you must return to Paris before our ideas can at all agree. But *à propos* of Venice, I have some thought of going thither next summer; events may call me to take possession of that same villa, too, which they tell me is the most charming that can be imagined. In that case I shall leave the improvements I mention to another year; and I may perhaps be tempted to stay some time in Italy."

Emily was somewhat surprised to hear him talk of being tempted to remain abroad, after he had mentioned his presence to be so necessary at Paris, that it was with difficulty he could steal away for a month or two; but St. Aubert understood the self-importance of the man too well to wonder at this trait; and the possibility that these projected improvements might be deferred, gave him a hope that they might never take place.

Before they separated for the night, M. Quesnel desired to speak with St. Aubert alone; and they retired to another room, where they remained a considerable time. The subject of this conversation was not known: but, whatever it might be, St. Aubert, when he returned to the supper-room, seemed much disturbed; and a shade of sorrow sometimes fell upon his features that alarmed Madame St. Aubert. When they were alone, she was tempted to inquire the occasion of it; but the delicacy of mind, which had ever appeared in his conduct, restrained her: she considered that, if St. Aubert wished her to be acquainted with the subject of his concern, he would not wait for her inquiries.

On the following day, before M. Quesnel departed, he had a second conference with St. Aubert.

The guests, after dining at the château, set out in the cool of the day for Epourville, whither they gave him and Madame St. Aubert a pressing invitation, prompted rather by the vanity

of displaying their splendour than by a wish to make their friends happy.

Emily returned with delight to the liberty which their presence had restrained—to her books, her walks, and the rational conversation of Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert, who seemed to rejoice no less that they were delivered from the shackles which arrogance and frivolity had imposed.

Madame St. Aubert excused herself from sharing their usual evening walk, complaining that she was not quite well; and St. Aubert and Emily went out together.

They chose a walk towards the mountains, intending to visit some old pensioners of St. Aubert, whom, from his very moderate income, he contrived to support; though it is probable M. Quesnel, with his very large one, could not have afforded this.

After distributing to his pensioners their weekly stipends—listening patiently to the complaints of some, redressing the grievances of others, and softening the discontents of all by the look of sympathy and the smile of benevolence—St. Aubert returned home through the woods,

. . . where
At fall of eve, the fairy people throng,
In various games and revelry to pass
The summer night as village stories tell.

THOMSON.

“The evening gloom of woods was always delightful to me,” said St. Aubert, whose mind now experienced the sweet calm which results from the consciousness of having done a beneficent action, and which disposes it to receive pleasure from every surrounding object. “I remember that in my youth this gloom used to call forth to my fancy a thousand fairy visions and romantic images; and I own I am not yet wholly insensible of that high enthusiasm which wakes the poet’s dream: I can linger with solemn steps under the deep shades, send forward a transforming eye into the distant obscurity, and listen with thrilling delight to the mystic murmuring of the woods.”

“O my dear father,” said Emily, while a sudden tear started to her eye, “how exactly you describe what I have felt so often, and which I thought nobody had ever felt but myself! But, hark! here comes the sweeping sound over the wood-tops—Now it dies away. How solemn the stillness that succeeds! Now the breeze swells again! It is like the voice of some supernatural being—the voice of the spirit of the woods, that watches over them by night. Ah! what light is yonder? But

it is gone!—and now it gleams again, near the root of that large chestnut: look, sir!”

“Are you such an admirer of nature,” said St. Aubert, “and so little acquainted with her appearances, as not to know that for the glow-worm? But come,” added he gaily, “step a little farther, and we shall see fairies perhaps; they are often companions. The glow-worm lends his light, and they in return charm him with music and the dance. Do you see nothing tripping yonder?”

Emily laughed. “Well, my dear sir,” said she, “since you allow of this alliance, I may venture to own I have anticipated you; and almost dare venture to repeat some verses I made one evening in these very woods.”

“Nay,” replied St. Aubert, “dismiss the *almost*, and venture quite: let us hear what vagaries fancy has been playing in your mind. If she has given you one of her spells, you need not envy those of the fairies.”

“If it is strong enough to enchant your judgment, sir,” said Emily, “while I disclose her images, I need *not* envy them. The lines go in a sort of tripping measure, which I thought might suit the subject well enough; but I fear they are too irregular.”

THE GLOW-WORM

How pleasant is the green-wood's deep-matted shade

On a midsummer's eve, when the fresh rain is o'er;
When the yellow beams slope, and sparkle through the glade,
And swiftly in the thin air the light swallows soar!

But sweeter, sweeter still, when the sun sinks to rest,
And twilight comes on, with the fairies so gay
Tripping through the forest-walk, where flowers, unprest,
Bow not their tall heads beneath their frolic play.

To music's softest sounds they dance away the hour,
Till moonlight steals down among the trembling leaves,
And chequers all the ground, and guides them to the bower,
The long-haunted bower, where the nightingale grieves.

Then no more they dance, till her sad song is done,
But, silent as the night, to her mourning attend;
And often as her dying notes their pity have won,
They vow all her sacred haunts from mortals to defend.

When down among the mountains sinks the evening star,
And the changing moon forsakes this shadowy sphere,
How cheerless would they be, though they fairies are,
If I, with my pale light, came not near!

Yet cheerless though they'd be, they're ungrateful to my love!
 For often, when the traveller's benighted on his way,
 And I glimmer in his path, and would guide him through the
 grove,

They bind me in their magic spells to lead him far astray;

And in the mire to leave him, till the stars are all burnt out;
 While in strange-looking shapes they frisk about the ground,
 And afar in the woods they raise a dismal shout,
 Till I shrink into my cell again for terror of the sound!

But, see where all the tiny elves come dancing in a ring,
 With the merry merry pipe, and the tabor, and the horn,
 And the timbrel so clear, and the lute with dulcet string;
 Then round about the oak they go till peeping of the morn.

Down yonder glade two lovers steal, to shun the fairy queen,
 Who frowns upon their plighted vows, and jealous is of me,
 That yester-eve I lighted them, along the dewy green,
 To seek the purple flower whose juice from all her spells can free.

And now to punish me, she keeps afar her jocund band,
 With the merry merry pipe, and the tabor, and the lute:
 If I creep near yonder oak she will wave her fairy wand,
 And to me the dance will cease, and the music all be mute.

Oh! had I but that purple flower whose leaves her charms can foil,
 And knew like fays to draw the juice, and throw it on the wind,
 I'd be her slave no longer, nor the traveller beguile,
 And help all faithful lovers, nor fear the fairy kind!

But soon the *vapour of the woods* will wander afar,
 And the fickle moon will fade, and the stars disappear;
 Then cheerless will they be, though they fairies are,
 If I, with my pale light, come not near!

Whatever St. Aubert might think of the stanzas he would not deny his daughter the pleasure of believing that he approved them; and having given his commendation he sunk into a reverie, and they walked on in silence. (

. . . A faint erroneous ray,
 Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
 Flung half an image on the straining eye;
 While waving woods, and villages, and streams,
 And rocks, and mountain tops, that long retain
 The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
 Uncertain if beheld.

THOMSON.

St. Aubert continued silent till he reached the château, where his wife had retired to her chamber. The languor and dejection

himself in her presence. Emily was at first overwhelmed with the intelligence; then, deluded by the strength of her wishes, hope sprung up in her mind that her mother would yet recover, and to this she pertinaciously adhered almost to the last hour.

The progress of this disorder was marked, on the side of Madame St. Aubert, by patient suffering and subjected wishes. The composure with which she awaited her death could be derived only from the retrospect of a life governed, as far as human frailty permits, by a consciousness of being always in the presence of the Deity, and by the hope of a higher world. But her piety could not entirely subdue the grief of parting from those whom she so dearly loved. During these her last hours she conversed much with St. Aubert and Emily on the prospect of futurity, and other religious topics. The resignation she expressed, with the firm hope of meeting in a future world the friends she left in this, and the effort which sometimes appeared to conceal her sorrow at this temporary separation, frequently affected St. Aubert so much as to oblige him to leave the room. Having indulged his tears awhile, he would dry them, and return to the chamber with a countenance composed by an endeavour which did but increase his grief.

Never had Emily felt the importance of the lessons which had taught her to restrain her sensibility so much as in these moments and never had she practised them with a triumph so complete. But when the last was over she sunk at once under the pressure of her sorrow, and then perceived that it was hope, as well as fortitude, which had hitherto supported her. St. Aubert was for a time too devoid of comfort himself to bestow any on his daughter.

CHAPTER II

I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul.

SHAKESPEARE.

MADAME ST. AUBERT was interred in the neighbouring village church: her husband and daughter attended her to the grave, followed by a long train of the peasantry, who were sincere mourners of this excellent woman.

On his return from the funeral, St. Aubert shut himself in his chamber. When he came forth it was with a serene countenance, though pale in sorrow. He gave orders that his family

should attend him. Emily only was absent; who, overcome with the scene she had just witnessed, had retired to her closet to weep alone. St. Aubert followed her thither: he took her hand in silence, while she continued to weep: and it was some moments before he could so far command his voice as to speak. It trembled while he said, "My Emily, I am going to prayers with my family; you will join us. We must ask support from above. *Where else ought we to seek it—where else can we find it?*"

Emily checked her tears, and followed her father to the parlour, where the servants being assembled, St. Aubert read, in a low and solemn voice, the Evening Service, and added a prayer for the soul of the departed. During this his voice often faltered, his tears fell upon the book, and at length he paused. But the sublime emotions of pure devotion gradually elevated his views above this world, and finally brought comfort to his heart.

When the service was ended, and the servants were withdrawn, he tenderly kissed Emily, and said: "I have endeavoured to teach you, from your earliest youth, the duty of self-command; I have pointed out to you the great importance of it through life, not only as it preserves us in the various and dangerous temptations that call us from rectitude and virtue, but as it limits the indulgences which are termed virtuous, yet which, extended beyond a certain boundary, are vicious, for their consequence is evil. All excess is vicious; even that sorrow which is amiable in its origin, becomes a selfish and unjust passion if indulged at the expense of our duties: by our duties I mean what we owe to ourselves as well as to others. The indulgence of excessive grief enervates the mind, and almost incapacitates it for again partaking of those various innocent enjoyments which a benevolent God designed to be the sunshine of our lives. My dear Emily, recollect and practise the precepts I have so often given you, and which your own experience has so often shown you to be wise.

"Your sorrow is useless. Do not receive this as merely a commonplace remark, but let reason *therefore* restrain sorrow. I would not annihilate your feelings, my child, I would only teach you to command them; for whatever may be the evils resulting from a too susceptible heart, nothing can be hoped from an insensible one; that, on the other hand, is all vice—vice, of which the deformity is not softened, or the effect consoled for, by any semblance or possibility of good. You know my sufferings, and are therefore convinced that mine are not the light

words which, on these occasions, are so often repeated to destroy even the sources of honest emotion, or which merely display the selfish ostentation of a false philosophy. I will show my Emily that I can practise what I advise. I have said thus much because I cannot bear to see you wasting in useless sorrow for want of that resistance which is due from mind; and I have not said it till now, because there is a period when all reasoning must yield to nature; that is past: and another, when excessive indulgence having sunk into habits, weighs down the elasticity of the spirits so as to render conquest nearly impossible; that is to come. You, my Emily, will show that you are willing to avoid it."

Emily smiled through her tears upon her father. "Dear sir," said she, and her voice trembled; she would have added, "I will show myself worthy of being your daughter"; but a mingled emotion of gratitude, affection, and grief overcame her.

St. Aubert suffered her to weep without interruption, and then began to talk on common topics.

The first person who came to condole with St. Aubert was a M. Barreaux, an austere and seemingly unfeeling man. A taste for botany had introduced them to each other, for they had frequently met in their wanderings among the mountains. M. Barreaux had retired from the world, and almost from society, to live in a pleasant château on the skirts of the woods near La Vallée. He also had been disappointed in his opinion of mankind; but he did not, like St. Aubert, pity and mourn for them; he felt more indignation at their vices than compassion for their weaknesses.

St. Aubert was somewhat surprised to see him; for though he had often pressed him to come to the château, he had never till now accepted the invitation: and now he came without ceremony or reserve, entering the parlour as an old friend. The claims of misfortune appeared to have softened down all the ruggedness and prejudices of his heart. St. Aubert unhappy, seemed to be the sole idea that occupied his mind. It was in manners, more than in words, that he appeared to sympathize with his friends; he spoke little on the subject of their grief; but the minute attention he gave them, and the modulated voice and softened look that accompanied it, came from his heart, and spoke to theirs.

At this melancholy period St. Aubert was likewise visited by Madame Cheron, his only surviving sister, who had been some years a widow, and now resided on her own estate near

Toulouse. The intercourse between them had not been very frequent. In her condolences, words were not wanting; she understood not the magic of the look that speaks at once to the soul, or the voice that sinks like balm to the heart: but she assured St. Aubert that she sincerely sympathized with him; praised the virtues of his late wife, and then offered what she considered to be consolation. Emily wept unceasingly while she spoke; St. Aubert was tranquil, listened to what she said in silence, and then turned the discourse upon another subject.

At parting, she pressed him and her niece to make her an early visit. "Change of place will amuse you," said she; "and it is wrong to give way to grief."

St. Aubert acknowledged the truth of these words, of course; but at the same time felt more reluctant than ever to quit the spot which his past happiness had consecrated. The presence of his wife had sanctified every surrounding scene; and each day, as it gradually softened the acuteness of his suffering, assisted the tender enchantment that bound him to home.

But there are calls which must be complied with, and of this kind was the visit he paid to his brother-in-law M. Quesnel. An affair of an interesting nature made it necessary that he should delay the visit no longer; and, wishing to rouse Emily from her dejection, he took her with him to Epourville.

As the carriage entered upon the forest that adjoined his paternal domain, his eyes once more caught, between the chestnut avenue, the turreted corners of the château. He sighed to think of what had passed since he was last there, and that it was now the property of a man who neither revered nor valued it. At length he entered the avenue, whose lofty trees had so often delighted him when a boy, and whose melancholy shade was now so congenial with the tone of his spirits. Every feature of the edifice, distinguished by an air of heavy grandeur, appeared successively between the branches of the trees—the broad turret, the arched gateway that led into the courts, the drawbridge, and the dry fosse which surrounded the whole.

The sound of carriage wheels brought a troop of servants to the great gate, where St. Aubert alighted, and from which he led Emily into the Gothic hall, now no longer hung with the arms and ancient banners of the family. These were displaced, and the old wainscoting, and beams that crossed the roof, were painted white. The large table too, that used to stretch along the upper end of the hall, where the master of the mansion loved to display his hospitality, and whence the peal of laughter

and the song of conviviality had so often resounded, was now removed; even the benches that had surrounded the hall were no longer there. The heavy walls were hung with frivolous ornaments, and everything that appeared denoted the false taste and corrupted sentiments of the present owner.

St. Aubert followed a gay Parisian servant to a parlour, where sat Monsieur and Madame Quesnel, who received him with a stately politeness, and, after a few formal words of condolence, seemed to have forgotten that they ever had a sister.

Emily felt tears swell in her eyes, and then resentment checked them. St. Aubert, calm and deliberate, preserved his dignity without assuming importance, and Quesnel was depressed by his presence without exactly knowing wherefore.

After some general conversation, St. Aubert requested to speak with him alone; and Emily, being left with Madame Quesnel, soon learned that a large party was invited to dine at the château, and was compelled to hear that nothing which was past and irremediable ought to prevent the festivity of the present hour.

St. Aubert, when he was told that company were expected, felt a mixed emotion of disgust and indignation against the insensibility of Quesnel, which prompted him to return home immediately. But he was informed that Madame Cheron had been asked to meet him; and when he looked at Emily, and considered that a time might come when the enmity of her uncle would be prejudicial to her, he determined not to incur it himself, by conduct which would be resented as indecorous by the very persons who now showed so little sense of decorum.

Among the visitors assembled at dinner were two Italian gentlemen of whom one was named Montoni, a distant relation of Madame Quesnel, a man about forty, of an uncommonly handsome person, with features manly and expressive, but whose countenance exhibited, upon the whole, more of the haughtiness of command, and the quickness of discernment, than of any other character.

Signor Cavigni, his friend, appeared to be about thirty—inferior in dignity, but equal to him in penetration of countenance, and superior in insinuation of manner.

Emily was shocked by the salutation with which Madame Cheron met her father.

"Dear brother," said she, "I am concerned to see you look so very ill; do, pray, have advice!"

St. Aubert answered with a melancholy smile, that he felt

himself much as usual: but Emily's fears made her now fancy that her father looked worse than he really did.

Emily would have been amused by the new characters she saw, and the varied conversation that passed during dinner, which was served in a style of splendour she had seldom seen before, had her spirits been less oppressed. Of the guests, Signor Montoni was lately from Italy, and he spoke of the commotions which at that period agitated the country; talked of party-differences with warmth, and then lamented the probable consequences of the tumults. His friend spoke with equal ardour of the politics of his country; praised the government and prosperity of Venice, and boasted of its decided superiority over all the other Italian states. He then turned to the ladies, and talked with the same eloquence of Parisian fashions, the French opera, and French manners; and on the latter subject he did not fail to mingle what is so particularly agreeable to French taste. The flattery was not detected by those to whom it was addressed, though its effects in producing submissive attention did not escape his observation. When he could disengage himself from the assiduities of the other ladies, he sometimes addressed Emily: but she knew nothing of Parisian fashions, of Parisian operas; and her modesty, simplicity, and correct manners formed a decided contrast to those of her female companions.

After dinner, St. Aubert stole from the room to view once more the old chestnut which Quesnel talked of cutting down. As he stood under its shade, and looked up among its branches, still luxuriant, and saw here and there the blue sky trembling between them, the pursuits and events of his early days crowded fast to his mind, with the figures and characters of friends—long since gone from the earth! and he now felt himself to be almost an insulated being, with nobody but his Emily for his heart to turn to.

He stood lost amid the scenes of years which fancy called up, till the succession closed with the picture of his dying wife; and he started away, to forget it, if possible, at the social board.

St. Aubert ordered his carriage at an early hour, and Emily observed that he was more than usually silent and dejected on the way home; but she considered this to be the effect of his visit to a place which spoke so eloquently of former times, nor suspected that he had a cause of grief which he concealed from her.

On entering the château she felt more depressed than ever, for she more than ever missed the presence of that dear parent,

who, whenever she had been from home, used to welcome her return with smiles and fondness: now all was silent and forsaken!

But what reason and effort may fail to do, time effects: week after week passed away, and each, as it passed, stole something from the harshness of her affliction, till it was mellowed to that tenderness which the feeling heart cherishes as sacred. St. Aubert, on the contrary, visibly declined in health; though Emily, who had been so constantly with him, was almost the last person who observed it. His constitution had never recovered from the late attack of the fever; and the succeeding shock it received from Madame St. Aubert's death had produced his present infirmity. His physician now ordered him to travel; for it was perceptible that sorrow had seized upon his nerves, weakened as they had been by the preceding illness; a variety of scene, it was probable, would, by amusing his mind, restore them to their proper tone.

For some days Emily was occupied in preparations to attend him; and he, by endeavours to diminish his expenses at home during the journey—a purpose which determined him at length to dismiss his domestics.

Emily seldom opposed her father's wishes by questions or remonstrances, or she would now have asked why he did not take a servant, and have represented that his infirm health made one almost necessary. But when, on the eve of their departure, she found that he had dismissed Jacques, Francis, and Mary, and detained only Theresa, the old housekeeper, she was extremely surprised, and ventured to ask his reason for having done so.

"To save expenses, my dear," he replied; "we are going on an expensive excursion."

The physician had prescribed the air of Languedoc and Provence; and St. Aubert determined therefore to travel leisurely along the shores of the Mediterranean, towards Provence.

They retired early to their chamber on the night before their departure: but Emily had a few books and other things to collect, and the clock had struck twelve before she had finished, or had remembered that some of her drawing instruments, which she meant to take with her, were in the parlour below. As she went to fetch these, she passed her father's room, and perceiving the door half open, concluded that he was in his study; for, since the death of Madame St. Aubert, it had been frequently his custom to rise from his restless bed, and go thither to compose his mind. When she was below stairs she looked into this room,

but without finding him; and as she returned to her chamber, she tapped at his door, and receiving no answer, stepped softly in, to be certain whether he was there.

The room was dark, but a light glimmered through some panes of glass that were placed in the upper part of a closet-door.

Emily believed her father to be in the closet, and, surprised that he was up at so late an hour, apprehended he was unwell, and was going to inquire; but considering that her sudden appearance at this hour might alarm him, she removed her light to the staircase, and then stepped softly to the closet.

On looking through the panes of glass, she saw him seated at a small table, with papers before him, some of which he was reading with deep attention and interest, during which he often wept and sobbed aloud.

Emily, who had come to the door to learn whether her father was ill, was now detained there by a mixture of curiosity and tenderness. She could not witness his sorrow without being anxious to know the subject of it; and she therefore continued to observe him in silence, concluding that those papers were letters of her late mother.

Presently he kneeled down, and, with a look so solemn as she had seldom seen him assume, and which was mingled with a certain wild expression, that partook more of horror than of any other character, he prayed silently for a considerable time.

When he rose, a ghastly paleness was on his countenance. Emily was hastily retiring; but she saw him turn again to the papers, and she stopped. He took from among them a small case, and from thence a miniature picture. The rays of light fell strongly upon it, and she perceived it to be that of a lady but not of her mother.

St. Aubert gazed earnestly and tenderly upon this portrait, put it to his lips, and then to his heart, and sighed with a convulsive force.

Emily could scarcely believe what she saw to be real. She never knew till now that he had a picture of any other lady than her mother, much less that he had one which he evidently valued so highly; but having looked repeatedly, to be certain that it was not the resemblance of Madame St. Aubert, she became entirely convinced that it was designed for that of some other person.

At length St. Aubert returned the picture to its case; and Emily, recollecting that she was intruding upon his private sorrows, softly withdrew from the chamber.

CHAPTER III

O how can thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields?
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even;
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven;
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven?

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These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.

The Minstrel.

ST. AUBERT, instead of taking the more direct road that ran along the feet of the Pyrenees to Languedoc, chose one that, winding over the heights, afforded more extensive views and greater variety of romantic scenery. He turned a little out of his way to take leave of M. Barreaux, whom he found botanizing in the wood near his château, and who, when he was told the purpose of St. Aubert's visit, expressed a degree of concern such as his friend had thought it was scarcely possible for him to feel on any similar occasion. They parted with mutual regret.

"If anything could have tempted me from my retirement," said M. Barreaux, "it would have been the pleasure of accompanying you on this little tour. I do not often offer compliments; you may therefore believe me when I say that I shall look for your return with impatience."

The travellers proceeded on their journey. As they ascended the heights, St. Aubert often looked back upon the château in the plain below; tender images crowded to his mind; his melancholy imagination suggested that he should return no more; and though he checked this wandering thought, still he continued to look, till the haziness of distance blended his home with the general landscape, and St. Aubert seemed to

Drag at each remove a lengthening chain.

He and Emily continued sunk in musing silence for some leagues; from which melancholy reverie Emily first awoke, and her young fancy, struck with the grandeur of the objects around, gradually yielded to delightful impressions. The road now

descended into glens, confined by stupendous walls of rock, grey, and barren, except where shrubs fringed their summits, or patches of meagre vegetation tinted their recesses, in which the wild goat was frequently browsing. And now the way led to the lofty cliffs, from whence the landscape was seen extending in all its magnificence.

Emily could not restrain her transport as she looked over the pine forests of the mountains, upon the vast plains that (enriched with woods, towns, blushing vines, and plantations of almonds, palms, and olives) stretched along, till their various colours melted in distance into one harmonious hue, that seemed to unite earth with heaven. Through the whole of this glorious scene the majestic Garonne wandered, descending from its source among the Pyrenees, and winding its blue waves towards the Bay of Biscay.

The ruggedness of the unfrequented road often obliged the wanderers to alight from their little carriage; but they thought themselves amply repaid for this inconvenience by the grandeur of the scenes; and, while the muleteer led his animals slowly over the broken ground, the travellers had leisure to linger amid these solitudes, and to indulge the sublime reflections, which soften while they elevate the heart, and fill it with the certainty of a present God! Still the enjoyment of St. Aubert was touched with that pensive melancholy which gives to every object a mellow tint, and breathes a sacred charm over all around.

They had provided against part of the evil to be encountered from a want of convenient inns, by carrying a stock of provisions in the carriage; so that they might take refreshment on any pleasant spot, in the open air, and pass the nights wherever they should happen to meet with a comfortable cottage. For the mind also they had provided by a work on botany written by M. Barreaux, and by several of the Latin and Italian poets; while Emily's pencil enabled her to preserve some of those combinations of forms which charmed her at every step.

The loneliness of the road, where only now and then a peasant was seen driving a mule, or some mountaineer children at play among the rocks, heightened the effect of the scenery. St. Aubert was so much struck with it, that he determined, if he could hear of a road, to penetrate farther among the mountains, and, bending his way rather more to the south, to emerge into Roussillon, and coast the Mediterranean along part of that country to Languedoc.

Soon after midday they reached the summit of one of those

cliffs, which, bright with the verdure of palm-trees, adorn, like gems, the tremendous walls of the rocks, and which overlooked the greater part of Gascony and part of Languedoc. Here was shade and the fresh water of a spring, that, gliding among the turf, under the trees, thence precipitated itself from rock to rock, till its dashing murmurs were lost in the abyss, though its white foam was long seen amid the darkness of the pines below.

This was a spot well suited for rest, and the travellers alighted to dine, while the mules were unharnessed to browse on the savoury herbs that enriched this summit.

It was some time before St. Aubert and Emily could withdraw their attention from the surrounding objects, so as to partake of their little repast. Seated in the shade of the palms, St. Aubert pointed out to her observation the course of the rivers, the situation of great towns, and the boundaries of provinces, which science, rather than the eye, enabled him to describe. Notwithstanding his occupation, when he had talked awhile, he suddenly became silent, thoughtful, and tears often swelled in his eyes; which Emily observed, and the sympathy of her own heart told her their cause. The scene before them bore some resemblance, though it was on a much grander scale, to a favourite one of the late Madame St. Aubert, within view of the fishing-house. They both observed this, and thought how delighted she would have been with the present landscape, while they knew that her eyes must never, never more open upon this world. St. Aubert remembered the last time of his visiting the spot in company with her, and also the mournfully presaging thoughts which had then arisen in his mind, and were now, even thus soon, realized! The recollections subdued him, and he abruptly rose from his seat, and walked away to where no eye could observe his grief.

When he returned, his countenance had recovered its usual serenity: he took Emily's hand, pressed it affectionately, without speaking, and soon after called to the muleteer, who sat at a little distance, concerning a road among the mountains towards Roussillon. Michael said there were several that way, but he did not know how far they extended, or even whether they were passable; and St. Aubert, who did not intend to travel after sunset, asked what village they could reach about that time. The muleteer calculated that they could easily reach Mateau, which was in their present road; but that if they took a road that sloped more to the south, towards Roussillon, there was a hamlet, which he thought they could gain before the evening shut in.

St. Aubert, after some hesitation, determined to take the latter course; and Michael, having finished his meal and harnessed his mules, again set forward—but soon stopped; and St. Aubert saw him doing homage to a cross that stood on a rock impending over their way. Having concluded his devotions, he smacked his whip in the air, and, in spite of the rough road and the pain of his poor mules (which he had been lately lamenting), rattled in a full gallop, along the edge of a precipice which it made the eye dizzy to look down. Emily was terrified almost to fainting, and St. Aubert, apprehending still greater danger from suddenly stopping the driver, was compelled to sit quietly, and trust his fate to the strength and discretion of the mules, who seemed to possess a greater portion of the latter quality than their master; for they carried the travellers safely into the valley, and there stopped upon the brink of the rivulet that watered it.

Leaving the splendour of extensive prospects, they now entered this narrow valley, screened by

Rocks on rocks piled, as if by magic spell;
Here scorch'd by lightnings, there with ivy green.

The scene of barrenness was here and there interrupted by the spreading branches of the larch and cedar, which threw their gloom over the cliff, or athwart the torrent that rolled in the vale. No living creature appeared—except the izard scrambling among the rocks, and often hanging upon points so dangerous that fancy shrunk from the view of them. This was such a scene as Salvator would have chosen, had he then existed, for his canvas. St. Aubert, impressed by the romantic character of the place, almost expected to see banditti start from behind some projecting rock, and he kept his hand upon the arms with which he always travelled.

As they advanced, the valley opened; its savage features gradually softened, and towards evening they were among heathy mountains stretched in far perspective, along which the solitary sheep-bell was heard, and the voice of the shepherd calling his wandering flocks to the nightly fold. His cabin, partly shadowed by the cork-tree and the ilex, which St. Aubert observed to flourish in higher regions of the air than any other trees, except the fir, was all the human habitation that yet appeared. Along the bottom of this valley the most vivid verdure was spread; and in the little hollow recesses of the mountains, under the shade of the oak and chestnut, herds of cattle were grazing. Groups of them, too, were often seen reposing on the banks of

the rivulet, or laving their sides in the cool stream, and sipping its wave.

The sun was now setting upon the valley—its last light gleamed upon the water, and heightened the rich yellow and purple tints of the heath and broom that overspread the mountains. St. Aubert inquired of Michael the distance to the hamlet he had mentioned, but the man could not with certainty tell; and Emily began to fear that he had mistaken the road. Here was no human being to assist or direct them: they had left the shepherd and his cabin far behind; and the scene became so obscured in twilight, that the eye could not follow the distant perspective of the valley, in search of a cottage or a hamlet. A glow of the horizon still marked the west, and this was of some little use to the travellers. Michael seemed endeavouring to keep up his courage by singing; his music, however, was not of a kind to disperse melancholy; he sung, in a sort of chant, one of the most dismal ditties his present auditors had ever heard, and St. Aubert at length discovered it to be a vesper-hymn to his favourite saint.

They travelled on, sunk in that thoughtful melancholy with which twilight and solitude impress the mind. Michael had now ended his ditty; and nothing was heard but the drowsy murmur of the breeze among the woods, and its light flutter as it blew freshly into the carriage. They were at length roused by the sound of fire-arms. St. Aubert called to the muleteer to stop, and they listened. The noise was not repeated; but presently they heard a rustling among the brakes. St. Aubert drew forth a pistol, and ordered Michael to proceed as fast as possible; who had not long obeyed before a horn sounded that made the valley ring. He looked again from the window, and then saw a young man spring from the bushes into the road, followed by a couple of dogs. The stranger was in a hunter's dress; his gun was slung across his shoulders; the hunter's horn hung from his belt; and in his hand was a small pike, which, as he held it, added to the manly grace of his figure, and assisted the agility of his steps.

After a moment's hesitation, St. Aubert again stopped the carriage, and waited till he came up, that they might inquire concerning the hamlet they were in search of. The stranger informed him that it was only half a league distant; that he was going thither himself, and would readily show the way. St. Aubert thanked him for the offer, and, pleased with his chevalier-like air and open countenance, asked him to take a seat in the

carriage; which the stranger, with an acknowledgment, declined, adding that he would keep pace with the mules.

"But I fear you will be wretchedly accommodated," said he; "the inhabitants of these mountains are a simple people, who are not only without the luxuries of life, but almost destitute of what in other places are held to be its necessities."

"I perceive you are not one of its inhabitants, sir," said St. Aubert.

"No, sir; I am only a wanderer here."

The carriage drove on; and the increasing dusk made the travellers very thankful that they had a guide; the frequent glens, too, that now opened among the mountains, would likewise have added to their perplexity. Emily, as she looked up one of these, saw something at a great distance like a bright cloud in the air.

"What light is yonder, sir?" said she.

St. Aubert looked, and perceived that it was the snowy summit of a mountain, so much higher than any around it, that it still reflected the sun's rays, while those below lay in deep shade.

At length the village lights were seen to twinkle through the dusk, and soon after, some cottages were discovered in the valley, or rather were seen by reflection in the stream, on whose margin they stood, and which still gleamed with the evening light.

The stranger now came up; and St. Aubert, on further inquiry, found not only that there was no inn in the place, but not any sort of house of public reception. The stranger, however, offered to walk on, and inquire for a cottage to accommodate them; for which further civility St. Aubert returned his thanks, and said, that, as the village was so near, he would alight and walk with him. Emily followed slowly in the carriage.

On the way St. Aubert asked his companion what success he had had in the chase.

"Not much, sir," he replied; "nor do I aim at it: I am pleased with the country, and mean to saunter away a few weeks among its scenes: my dogs I take with me more for companionship than for game: this dress, too, gives me an ostensible business, and procures me that respect from the people which would, perhaps, be refused to a lonely stranger who had no visible motive for coming among them."

"I admire your taste," said St. Aubert, "and if I were a younger man, should like to pass a few weeks in your way exceedingly. I, too, am a wanderer; but neither my plan nor

pursuits are exactly like yours. I go in search of health as much as of amusement." St. Aubert sighed, and paused; and then, seeming to recollect himself, he resumed: "If I can hear of a tolerable road that shall afford decent accommodation, it is my intention to pass into Roussillon, and along the seashore to Languedoc. You, sir, seem to be acquainted with the country and can, perhaps, give me information on the subject?"

The stranger said that what information he could give was entirely at his service; and then mentioned a road rather more to the east, which led to a town, whence it would be easy to proceed into Roussillon.

They now arrived at the village, and commenced their search for a cottage that would afford a night's lodging. In several which they entered ignorance, poverty, and mirth seemed equally to prevail; and the owners eyed St. Aubert with a mixture of curiosity and timidity. Nothing like a bed could be found; and he had ceased to inquire for one, when Emily joined him, who observed the languor of her father's countenance, and lamented that he had taken a road so ill provided with the comforts necessary for an invalid. Other cottages which they examined seemed somewhat less savage than the former, consisting of two rooms, if such they could be called—the first of these occupied by mules and pigs; the second by the family, which generally consisted of six or eight children, with their parents, who slept on beds of skins and dried beech leaves spread upon a mud floor. Here light was admitted, and smoke discharged through an aperture in the roof; and here the scent of spirits (for the travelling smugglers who haunted the Pyrenees had made the rude people familiar with the use of liquors) was generally perceptible enough.

Emily turned from such scenes, and looked at her father with anxious tenderness, which the young stranger seemed to observe; for, drawing St. Aubert aside, he made him an offer of his own bed.

"It is a decent one," said he, "when compared with what we have just seen, yet such as in other circumstances I should be ashamed to offer you."

St. Aubert acknowledged how much he felt himself obliged by this kindness; but refused to accept it till the young stranger would take no denial.

"Do not give me the pain of knowing, sir," said he, "that an invalid like you lies on hard skins while I sleep in a bed. Besides, sir, your refusal wounds my pride; I must believe you think

my offer unworthy your acceptance. Let me show you the way. I have no doubt my landlady can accommodate this young lady also."

St. Aubert at length consented, that, if this could be done, he would accept the kindness; though he felt rather surprised that the stranger had proved himself so deficient in gallantry as to administer to the repose of an infirm man rather than to that of a very lovely young woman; for he had not once offered the room for Emily. But she thought not of herself; and the animated smile she gave him told how much she felt herself obliged for the preference of her father.

On their way, the stranger, whose name was Valancourt, stepped on first to speak to his hostess; and she came out to welcome St. Aubert into a cottage much superior to any he had seen. This good woman seemed very willing to accommodate the strangers, who were soon compelled to accept the only two beds in the place. Eggs and milk were the only food the cottage afforded; but against scarcity of provisions St. Aubert had provided; and he requested Valancourt to stay and partake with him of less homely fare—an invitation which was readily accepted; and they passed an hour in intelligent conversation. St. Aubert was much pleased with the manly frankness, simplicity, and keen susceptibility to the grandeur of nature which his new acquaintance discovered; and, indeed, he had often been heard to say, that without a certain simplicity of heart this taste could not exist in any strong degree.

The conversation was interrupted by a violent uproar without, in which the voice of the muleteer was heard above every other sound. Valancourt started from his seat, and went to inquire the occasion; but the dispute continued so long afterwards that St. Aubert went himself, and found Michael quarrelling with the hostess because she had refused to let his mules lie in a little room where he and three of her sons were to pass the night. The place was wretched enough, but there was no other for these people to sleep in; and, with somewhat more of delicacy than was usual among the inhabitants of this wild tract of country, she persisted in refusing to let the animals have the same *bed-chamber* with her children. This was a tender point with the muleteer: his honour was wounded when his mules were treated with disrespect, and he would have received a blow, perhaps, with more meekness. He declared that his beasts were as honest beasts and as good beasts as any in the whole province; and that they had a right to be well treated wherever they went.

"They are as harmless as lambs," said he, "if people don't affront them. I never knew them behave themselves amiss above once or twice in my life, and then they had good reason for doing so. Once indeed they kicked at a boy's leg that lay asleep in the stable, and broke it; but I told them they were out there: and by St. Anthony! I believe they understood me, for they never did so again."

He concluded this eloquent harangue with protesting that they should share with him, go where he would.

The dispute was at length settled by Valancourt, who drew the hostess aside, and desired she would let the muleteer and his beasts have the place in question to themselves, while her sons should have the bed of skins designed for him, for that he would wrap himself in his cloak, and sleep on the bench by the cottage door. But this she thought it her duty to oppose; and she felt it to be her inclination to disappoint the muleteer. Valancourt, however, was positive; and the tedious affair was at length settled.

It was late when St. Aubert and Emily retired to their rooms, and Valancourt to his station at the door, which, at this mild season, he preferred to a close cabin and a bed of skins. St. Aubert was somewhat surprised to find in his room volumes of Homer, Horace, and Petrarch; but the name of Valancourt, written in them, told him to whom they belonged.

CHAPTER IV.

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle and each dreadful scene:
In darkness and in storm he found delight;
Nor less than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling sheen.
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul;
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control.

The Minstrel.

ST. AUBERT awoke at an early hour, refreshed by sleep, and desirous to set forward. He invited the stranger to breakfast with him; and, talking again of the road, Valancourt said that some months past he had travelled as far as Beaujeu, which was a town of some consequence on the way to Roussillon. He

regions abound ; while Emily, wrapt in high enthusiasm, wandered away under the shades, listening in deep silence to the lonely murmur of the woods.

Neither village nor hamlet was seen for many leagues: the goatherd's or the hunter's cabin, perched among the cliffs of the rocks, were the only human habitations that appeared.

The travellers again took their dinner in the open air, on a pleasant spot in the valley, under the spreading shade of cedars; and then set forward towards Beaujeu.

The road now began to descend, and, leaving the pine forest behind, wound among rocky precipices. The evening twilight again fell over the scene, and the travellers were ignorant how far they might yet be from Beaujeu.

St. Aubert, however, conjectured that the distance could not be very great, and comforted himself with the prospect of travelling on a more frequented road after reaching that town, where he designed to pass the night.

Mingled woods, and rocks, and heathy mountains, were now seen obscurely through the dusk; but soon even these imperfect images faded in darkness.

Michael proceeded with caution, for he could scarcely distinguish the road: his mules, however, seemed to have more sagacity, and their steps were sure.

On turning the angle of a mountain, a light appeared at a distance, that illumined the rocks and the horizon to a great extent. It was evidently a large fire; but whether accidental or otherwise, there were no means of knowing. St. Aubert thought it was probably kindled by some of the numerous banditti that infested the Pyrenees, and he became watchful and anxious to know whether the road passed near this fire. He had arms with him, which on an emergency might afford some protection, though certainly a very unequal one against a band of robbers, so desperate too as those usually were who haunted these wild regions. While many reflections rose upon his mind, he heard a voice shouting from the road behind, and ordering the muleteer to stop. St. Aubert bade him proceed as fast as possible; but either Michael or his mules were obstinate, for they did not quit the old pace. Horses' feet were now heard, a man rode up to the carriage, still ordering the driver to stop; and St. Aubert, who could no longer doubt his purpose, was with difficulty able to prepare a pistol for his defence, when his hand was upon the door of the chaise. The man staggered on his horse; the report of the pistol was followed by a groan; and

St. Aubert's horror may be imagined, when in the next instant he thought he heard the faint voice of Valancourt. He now himself bade the muleteer stop; and, pronouncing the name of Valancourt, was answered in a voice that no longer suffered him to doubt. St. Aubert, who instantly alighted and went to his assistance, found him still sitting on his horse, but bleeding profusely, and appearing to be in great pain, though he endeavoured to soften the terror of St. Aubert by assurances that he was not materially hurt, the wound being only in his arm. St. Aubert, with the muleteer, assisted him to dismount, and he sat down on the bank of the road, where St. Aubert tried to bind up his arm; but his hands trembled so excessively that he could not accomplish it; and Michael being gone in pursuit of the horse, which, on being disengaged from his rider, had galloped off, he called Emily to his assistance. Receiving no answer, he went to the carriage, and found her sunk on the seat in a fainting fit. Between the distress of this circumstance and that of leaving Valancourt bleeding, he scarcely knew what he did; he endeavoured, however, to raise her, and called to Michael to fetch water from the rivulet that flowed by the road; but Michael was gone beyond the reach of his voice. Valancourt, who heard these calls, and also the repeated name of Emily, instantly understood the subject of his distress; and, almost forgetting his own condition, he hastened to her relief. She was reviving when he reached the carriage; and then, understanding that anxiety for him had occasioned her indisposition, he assured her in a voice that trembled, but not from anguish, that his wound was of no consequence. While he said this, St. Aubert turned round; and perceiving that he was still bleeding, the subject of his alarm changed again, and he hastily formed some handkerchiefs into a bandage. This stopped the effusion of the blood; but St. Aubert, dreading the consequence of the wound, inquired repeatedly how far they were from Beaujeu; when learning that it was at two leagues' distance, his distress increased, since he knew not how Valancourt, in his present state, would bear the motion of the carriage, and perceived that he was already faint from loss of blood. When he mentioned the subject of his anxiety, Valancourt entreated that he would not suffer himself to be thus alarmed on his account, for that he had no doubt he should be able to support himself very well, and then he talked of the accident as a slight one. The muleteer, being now returned with Valancourt's horse, assisted him into the chaise; and as Emily was now revived, they moved slowly on towards Beaujeu.

St. Aubert, when he had recovered from the terror occasioned him by this accident, expressed surprise on seeing Valancourt, who explained his unexpected appearance by saying, "You, sir, renewed my taste for society; when you had left the hamlet, it did appear a solitude. I determined, therefore, since my object was merely amusement, to change the scene, and I took this road, because I knew it led through a more romantic tract of mountains than the spot I have left. Besides," added he, hesitating for an instant, "I will own—and why should I not?—that I had some hope of overtaking you."

"And I have made you a very unexpected return for the compliment," said St. Aubert, who lamented again the rashness which had produced the accident, and explained the cause of his late alarm. But Valancourt seemed anxious only to remove from the minds of his companions every unpleasant feeling relative to himself; and, for that purpose, still struggled against a sense of pain, and tried to converse with gaiety. Emily meanwhile was silent, except when Valancourt particularly addressed her; and there was at those times a tremulous tone in his voice that spoke much.

They were now so near the fire which had long flamed at a distance on the blackness of night, that it gleamed upon the road, and they could distinguish figures moving about the blaze. The way winding still nearer, they perceived in the valley one of those numerous bands of gipsies, which at that period particularly haunted the wilds of the Pyrenees, and lived partly by plundering the traveller. Emily looked with some degree of terror on the savage countenances of these people shown by the fire, which heightened the romantic effect of the scenery, as it threw a red dusky gleam upon the rocks and on the foliage of the trees, leaving heavy masses of shade and regions of obscurity which the eye feared to penetrate.

They were preparing their supper: a large pot stood by the fire, over which several figures were busy. The blaze discovered a rude kind of tent, round which many children and dogs were playing; and the whole formed a picture highly grotesque. The travellers saw plainly their danger. Valancourt was silent, but laid his hand on one of St. Aubert's pistols; St. Aubert drew forth another, and Michael was ordered to proceed as fast as possible. They passed the place, however, without being attacked; the rovers being probably unprepared for the opportunity, and too busy about their supper to feel much interest, at the moment, in anything besides.

After a league and a half more passed in darkness, the travellers arrived at Beaujeu, and drove up to the only inn the place afforded; which, though superior to any they had seen since they entered the mountains, was bad enough.

The surgeon of the town was immediately sent for, if a surgeon he could be called, who prescribed for horses as well as for men, and shaved faces at least as dexterously as he set bones. After examining Valancourt's arm, and perceiving that the bullet had passed through the flesh without touching the bone, he dressed it, and left him with a solemn prescription of quiet, which his patient was not inclined to obey. The delight of ease had now succeeded to pain—for ease may be allowed to assume a positive quality when contrasted with anguish—and his spirits thus re-animated, he wished to partake of the conversation of St. Aubert and Emily, who, released from so many apprehensions, were uncommonly cheerful. Late as it was, however, St. Aubert was obliged to go out with the landlord to buy meat for supper; and Emily, who, during this interval, had been absent as long as she could, upon excuses of looking to their accommodation, which she found rather better than she expected, was compelled to return and converse with Valancourt alone. They talked of the character of the scenes they had passed, of the natural history of the country, of poetry, and of St. Aubert, a subject on which Emily always spoke and listened to with peculiar pleasure.

The travellers passed an agreeable evening; but St. Aubert was fatigued with his journey, and as Valancourt seemed again sensible of pain, they separated soon after supper.

In the morning, St. Aubert found that Valancourt had passed a restless night; that he was feverish, and his wound very painful. The surgeon, when he dressed it, advised him to remain quietly at Beaujeu; advice which was too reasonable to be rejected. St. Aubert, however, had no favourable opinion of this practitioner, and was anxious to commit Valancourt into more skilful hands; but, learning upon inquiry that there was no town within several leagues, which seemed more like to afford better advice, he altered the plan of his journey, and determined to await the recovery of Valancourt, who, with somewhat more ceremony than sincerity, made many objections to this delay.

By order of his surgeon, Valancourt did not go out of the house that day; but St. Aubert and Emily surveyed with delight the environs of the town, situated at the feet of the Pyrenean Alps, that rose some in abrupt precipices, and others swelling

St. Aubert, when he had recovered from the terror occasioned him by this accident, expressed surprise on seeing Valancourt, who explained his unexpected appearance by saying, "You, sir, renewed my taste for society; when you had left the hamlet, it did appear a solitude. I determined, therefore, since my object was merely amusement, to change the scene, and I took this road, because I knew it led through a more romantic tract of mountains than the spot I have left. Besides," added he, hesitating for an instant, "I will own—and why should I not?—that I had some hope of overtaking you."

"And I have made you a very unexpected return for the compliment," said St. Aubert, who lamented again the rashness which had produced the accident, and explained the cause of his late alarm. But Valancourt seemed anxious only to remove from the minds of his companions every unpleasant feeling relative to himself; and, for that purpose, still struggled against a sense of pain, and tried to converse with gaiety. Emily meanwhile was silent, except when Valancourt particularly addressed her; and there was at those times a tremulous tone in his voice that spoke much.

They were now so near the fire which had long flamed at a distance on the blackness of night, that it gleamed upon the road, and they could distinguish figures moving about the blaze. The way winding still nearer, they perceived in the valley one of those numerous bands of gipsies, which at that period particularly haunted the wilds of the Pyrenees, and lived partly by plundering the traveller. Emily looked with some degree of terror on the savage countenances of these people shown by the fire, which heightened the romantic effect of the scenery, as it threw a red dusky gleam upon the rocks and on the foliage of the trees, leaving heavy masses of shade and regions of obscurity which the eye feared to penetrate.

They were preparing their supper: a large pot stood by the fire, over which several figures were busy. The blaze discovered a rude kind of tent, round which many children and dogs were playing; and the whole formed a picture highly grotesque. The travellers saw plainly their danger. Valancourt was silent, but laid his hand on one of St. Aubert's pistols; St. Aubert drew forth another, and Michael was ordered to proceed as fast as possible. They passed the place, however, without being attacked; the rovers being probably unprepared for the opportunity, and too busy about their supper to feel much interest, at the moment, in anything besides.

After a league and a half more passed in darkness, the travellers arrived at Beaujeu, and drove up to the only inn the place afforded; which, though superior to any they had seen since they entered the mountains, was bad enough.

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with woods of cedar, fir, and cypress, which stretched nearly to their highest summits. The cheerful green of the beech and mountain-ash was sometimes seen, like a gleam of light, amidst the dark verdure of the forest; and sometimes a torrent poured its sparkling flood high among the woods.

Valancourt's indisposition detained the travellers at Beaujeu several days, during which interval St. Aubert had observed his disposition and his talents with the philosophic inquiry so natural to him. He saw a frank and generous nature, full of ardour, highly susceptible of whatever is grand and beautiful, but impetuous, wild, and somewhat romantic. Valancourt had known little of the world. His perceptions were clear, and his feelings just; his indignation of an unworthy or his admiration of a generous action were expressed in terms of equal vehemence. St. Aubert sometimes smiled at his warmth, but seldom checked it; and often repeated to himself, "This young man has never been at Paris." A sigh sometimes followed this silent ejaculation. He determined not to leave Valancourt till he should be perfectly recovered; and, as he was now well enough to travel, though not able to manage his horse, St. Aubert invited him to accompany him for a few days in the carriage. This he the more readily did, since he had discovered that Valancourt was of a family of the same name in Gascony, with whose respectability he was well acquainted. The latter accepted the offer with great pleasure, and they again set forward among these romantic wilds towards Roussillon.

They travelled leisurely, stopping wherever a scene uncommonly grand appeared; frequently alighting to walk to an eminence, whither the mules could not go, from which the prospect opened in greater magnificence; and often sauntering over hillocks covered with lavender, wild thyme, juniper, and tamarisk, and under the shades of woods, between whose boles they caught the long mountain vista, sublime beyond anything that Emily had ever imagined.

St. Aubert sometimes amused himself with botanizing, while Valancourt and Emily strolled on; he pointing out to her notice the objects that particularly charmed him, and reciting beautiful passages from such of the Latin and Italian poets as he had heard her admire. In the pauses of conversation, when he thought himself not observed, he frequently fixed his eyes pensively on her countenance, which expressed with so much animation the taste and energy of her mind; and when he spoke again there was a peculiar tenderness in the tone of his voice,

that defeated any attempt to conceal his sentiments. By degrees these silent pauses became more frequent; till Emily, only, betrayed an anxiety to interrupt them; and she, who had been hitherto reserved, would now talk again and again of the woods and the valleys and the mountains, to avoid the danger of sympathy and silence.

From Beaujeu the road had constantly ascended, conducting the travellers into the higher regions of the air, where immense glaciers exhibited their frozen horrors, and eternal snow whitened the summits of the mountains. They often paused to contemplate these stupendous scenes, and, seated on some wild cliff, where only the ilex or the larch could flourish, looked over dark forests of fir, and precipices where human foot had never wandered, into the glen—so deep, that the thunder of the torrent, which was seen to foam along the bottom, was scarcely heard to murmur. Over these crags rose others of stupendous height and fantastic shape; some shooting into cones; others impending far over their base, in huge masses of granite, along whose broken ridges was often lodged a weight of snow, that, trembling even to the vibration of a sound, threatened to bear destruction in its course to the vale. Around, on every side, far as the eye could penetrate, were seen only forms of grandeur—the long perspective of mountain tops, tinged with ethereal blue, or white with snow; valleys of ice, and forests of gloomy fir. The serenity and clearness of the air in these high regions were particularly delightful to the travellers; it seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable complacency over their minds. They had no words to express the sublime emotions they felt. A solemn expression characterized the feelings of St. Aubert; tears often came to his eyes, and he frequently walked away from his companions. Valancourt now and then spoke, to point to Emily's notice some feature of the scene. The thinness of the atmosphere, through which every object came so distinctly to the eye, surprised and deluded her, who could scarcely believe that objects which appeared so near were in reality so distant. The deep silence of these solitudes was broken only at intervals by the scream of the vultures seen towering round some cliff below, or by the cry of the eagle sailing high in the air; except when the travellers listened to the hollow thunder that sometimes muttered at their feet. While, above, the deep blue of the heavens was unobscured by the lightest cloud, half-way down the mountains long billows of vapour were frequently seen rolling, now wholly

excluding the country below, and now opening, and partially revealing its features. Emily delighted to observe the grandeur of these clouds as they changed in shape and tints, and to watch their various effect on the lower world, whose features, partly veiled, were continually assuming new forms of sublimity.

After traversing these regions for many leagues, they began to descend towards Roussillon, and features of beauty then mingled with the scene. Yet the travellers did not look back without some regret to the sublime objects they had quitted; though the eye, fatigued with the extension of its powers, was glad to repose on the verdure of woods and pastures, that now hung on the margin of the river below; to view again the humble cottage shaded by cedars, the playful group of mountaineer children, and the flowery nooks that appeared among the hills.

As they descended, they saw at a distance, on the right, one of the grand passes of the Pyrenees into Spain, gleaming with its battlements and towers to the splendour of the setting rays; yellow tops of woods colouring the steeps below, while far above aspired the snowy points of the mountains, still reflecting a rosy hue.

St. Aubert began to look out for the little town he had been directed to by the people of Beaujeu, and where he meant to pass the night; but no habitation yet appeared. Of its distance Valancourt could not assist him to judge, for he had never been so far along this chain of Alps before. There was, however, a road to guide them; and there could be little doubt that it was the right one; for, since they had left Beaujeu, there had been no variety of tracks to perplex or mislead.

The sun now gave his last light, and St. Aubert bade the muleteer proceed with all possible dispatch. He found, indeed, the lassitude of illness return upon him, after a day of uncommon fatigue both of body and mind, and he longed for repose. His anxiety was not soothed by observing a numerous train, consisting of men, horses, and loaded mules, winding down the steeps of an opposite mountain, appearing and disappearing at intervals among the woods, so that its numbers could not be judged of. Something bright, like arms, glanced in the setting ray, and the military dress was distinguishable upon the men who were in the van, and on others scattered among the troop that followed. As these wound into the vale, the rear of the party emerged from the woods, and exhibited a band of soldiers. St. Aubert's apprehensions now subsided; he had no doubt that the train before him consisted of smugglers, who, in con-

veying prohibited goods over the Pyrenees, had been encountered and conquered by a party of troops.

The travellers had lingered so long among the sublimer scenes of these mountains, that they found themselves entirely mistaken in their calculation that they could reach Montigny at sunset; but, as they wound along the valley, they saw, on a rude Alpine bridge that united two lofty crags of the glen, a group of mountaineer children amusing themselves with dropping pebbles into the torrent below, and watching the stones plunge into the water, that threw up its white spray high in the air as it received them, and returned a sullen sound, which the echoes of the mountains prolonged. Under the bridge was seen a perspective of the valley, with its cataract descending among the rocks, and a cottage on the cliff overshadowed with pines. It appeared that they could not be far from some small town. St. Aubert bade the muleteer stop, and then called to the children to inquire if he was near Montigny; but the distance, and the roaring of the waters, would not suffer his voice to be heard; and the crags adjoining the bridge were of such tremendous height and steepness, that to have climbed either would have been scarcely practicable to a person unacquainted with the ascent. St. Aubert, therefore, did not waste more moments in delay. They continued to travel long after twilight had obscured the road, which was so broken that, now thinking it safer to walk than to ride, they all alighted. The moon was rising, but her light was yet too feeble to assist them. While they stepped carefully on, they heard the vesper-bell of a convent. The twilight would not permit them to distinguish anything like a building, but the sounds seemed to come from some woods that overhung an acclivity to the right. Valancourt proposed to go in search of this convent.

"If they will not accommodate us with a night's lodging," said he, "they may certainly inform us how far we are from Montigny, and direct us towards it."

He was bounding forward, without waiting St. Aubert's reply, when the latter stopped him.

"I am very weary," said St. Aubert, "and wish for nothing so much as for immediate rest. We will all go to the convent; your good looks would defeat our purpose; but when they see mine and Emily's exhausted countenance, they will scarcely deny us repose."

As he said this, he took Emily's arm within his, and, telling Michael to wait awhile in the road with the carriage, they began

to ascend towards the woods, guided by the bell of the convent. His steps were feeble, and Valancourt offered him his arm, which he accepted. The moon now threw a faint light over their path, and, soon after, enabled them to distinguish some towers rising above the tops of the woods. Still following the note of the bell, they entered the shade of those woods, lighted only by the moonbeams, that glided down between the leaves, and threw a tremulous uncertain gleam upon the steep track they were winding. The gloom, and the silence that prevailed (except when the bell returned upon the air), together with the wildness of the surrounding scene, struck Emily with a degree of fear, which, however, the voice and conversation of Valancourt somewhat repressed.

When they had been some time ascending, St. Aubert complained of weariness; and they stopped to rest upon a little green summit, where the trees opened, and admitted the moonlight. He sat down upon the turf, between Emily and Valancourt. The bell had now ceased, and the deep repose of the scene was undisturbed by any sound; for the low dull murmur of some distant torrent might be said to soothe rather than to interrupt the silence. Before them extended the valley they had quitted: its rocks and woods to the left, just silvered by the rays, formed a contrast to the deep shadow that involved the opposite cliffs, whose fringed summits only were tipped with light; while the distant perspective of the valley was lost in the yellow mist of moonlight. The travellers sat for some time wrapt in the complacency which such scenes inspire.

"These scenes," said Valancourt, at length, "soften the heart like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melancholy which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings; disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love, I always seem to love more in such an hour as this." His voice trembled, and he paused.

St. Aubert was silent: Emily perceived a warm tear fall upon the hand he held; she knew the object of his thoughts—hers, too, had for some time been occupied by the remembrance of her mother. He seemed by an effort to rouse himself. "Yes," said he, with a half-suppressed sigh, "the memory of those we love—of times for ever past!—in such an hour as this steals upon the mind like a strain of distant music in the stillness of night—all tender and harmonious as this landscape, sleeping in the mellow light." After a pause of a moment, St. Aubert added,

"I have always fancied that I thought with more clearness and precision at such an hour, than at any other; and that heart must be insensible in a great degree, that does not soften to its influence. But many such there are."

Valancourt sighed.

"Are there, indeed, many such?" said Emily.

"A few years hence, my dear Emily," replied St. Aubert, "and you may smile at the recollection of that question—if you do not weep at it. But come, I am somewhat refreshed: let us proceed."

Having emerged from the woods, they saw, upon a turfy hillock above, the convent of which they were in search. A high wall that surrounded it led them to an ancient gate, at which they knocked; and the poor monk who opened it conducted them into a small adjoining room, where he desired they would wait while he informed the superior of their request.

In this interval several friars came in separately to look at them; and at length the first monk returned, and they followed him to a room where the superior was sitting in an arm-chair, with a large folio volume, printed in black letter, open on a desk before him. He received them with courtesy, though he did not rise from his seat; and, having asked them a few questions, granted their request.

After a short conversation, formal and solemn on the part of the superior, they withdrew to the apartment where they were to sup; and Valancourt, whom one of the inferior friars civilly desired to accompany, went to seek Michael and his mules. They had not descended half-way down the cliffs before they heard the voice of the muleteer echoing far and wide.

Sometimes he called on St. Aubert, and sometimes on Valancourt; who having at length convinced him that he had nothing to fear, either for himself or his master, and having disposed of him for the night in a cottage on the skirts of the woods, returned to sup with his friends on such sober fare as the monks thought it prudent to set before them.

While St. Aubert was too much indisposed to share it, Emily, in her anxiety for her father, forgot herself; and Valancourt, silent and thoughtful, yet never inattentive to them, appeared particularly solicitous to accommodate and relieve St. Aubert; who often observed, while his daughter was pressing him to eat or adjusting the pillow she had placed in the back of his arm-chair, that Valancourt fixed on her a look of pensive tenderness, which she was not displeased to understand.

They separated at an early hour, and retired to their respective apartments.

Emily was shown to hers by a nun of the convent, whom she was glad to dismiss, for her heart was melancholy, and her attention so much abstracted that conversation with a stranger was painful.

She thought her father daily declining; and attributed his present fatigue more to the feeble state of his frame than to the difficulty of the journey. A train of gloomy ideas haunted her mind, till she fell asleep.

In about two hours after, she was awakened by the chiming of a bell, and then heard quick steps pass along the gallery into which her chamber opened. She was so little accustomed to the manners of a convent, as to be alarmed by this circumstance: her fears, ever alive for her father, suggested that he was very ill, and she arose in haste to go to him. Having paused, however, to let the persons in the gallery pass before she opened her door, her thoughts in the meantime recovered from the confusion of sleep, and she understood that the bell was the call of the monks to prayers.

It had now ceased; and all being again still, she forbore to go to St. Aubert's room. Her mind was not disposed for immediate sleep, and the moonlight, that shone into her chamber, invited her to open the casement, and look out upon the country.

It was a still and beautiful night—the sky was unobscured by any cloud, and scarce a leaf of the woods beneath trembled in the air.

As she listened, the midnight hymn of the monks rose softly from a chapel that stood on one of the lower cliffs—a holy strain that seemed to ascend through the silence of night to heaven; and her thoughts ascended with it.

From the consideration of His works, her mind rose to the adoration of the Deity, in His goodness and power: wherever she turned her view, whether on the sleeping earth, or to the vast regions of space glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought, the sublimity of God and the majesty of His presence appeared.

Her eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human systems, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature—such devotion as can, perhaps, only be experienced when the mind, rescued for a moment from the humbleness of earthly considerations, aspires

to contemplate His power in the sublimity of His works, and His goodness in the infinity of His blessings.

Is it not now the hour,
The holy hour, when to the cloudless height
Of yon starr'd concave, climbs the full-orb'd moon,
And to this nether world, in solemn stillness,
Gives sign, that, to the listening ear of Heaven,
Religion's voice should plead? The very babe
Knows this, and, chance awaked, his little hands
Lifts to the gods, and on his innocent couch
Calls down a blessing.

Caractacus.

The midnight chant of the monks soon after dropped into silence; but Emily remained at the casement watching the setting moon, and the valley sinking into deep shade, and willing to prolong her present state of mind. At length she retired to her mattress, and sunk into tranquil slumber.

CHAPTER V

While in the rosy vale
Love breathed his infant sighs, from anguish free.

THOMSON.

ST. AUBERT, sufficiently restored by a night's repose to pursue his journey, set out in the morning, with his family and Valancourt for Roussillon, which he hoped to reach before nightfall. The scenes through which they now passed were as wild and romantic as any they had yet observed; with this difference, that beauty, every now and then, softened the landscape into smiles.

Little woody recesses appeared among the mountains, covered with bright verdure and flowers; or a pastoral valley opened its grassy bosom in the shade of the cliffs, with flocks and herds loitering along the banks of a rivulet that refreshed it with perpetual green.

St. Aubert could not repent the having taken this fatiguing road, though he was this day, also, frequently obliged to alight, to walk along the rugged precipice, and to climb the steep and flinty mountain. The wonderful sublimity and variety of the prospects repaid him for all this; and the enthusiasm with which they were viewed by his young companions, heightened his own, and awakened a remembrance of all the delightful emotions

of his early days, when the sublime charms of nature were first unveiled to him. He found great pleasure in conversing with Valancourt, and in listening to his ingenious remarks; the fire and simplicity of his manners seemed to render him a characteristic figure in the scenes around them; and St. Aubert discovered in his sentiments the justness and the dignity of an elevated mind unbiased by intercourse with the world.

He perceived that his opinions were formed, rather than imbibed—were more the result of thought, than of learning: of the world he seemed to know nothing, for he believed well of all mankind; and this opinion gave him the reflected image of his own heart.

St. Aubert, as he sometimes lingered to examine the wild plants in his path, often looked forward with pleasure to Emily and Valancourt as they strolled on together—he with a countenance of animated delight pointing to her attention some grand feature of the scene; and she listening and observing with a look of tender seriousness that spoke the elevation of her mind. They appeared like two lovers who had never strayed beyond these their native mountains; whose situation had secluded them from the frivolities of common life; whose ideas were simple and grand, like the landscapes among which they moved; and who knew no other happiness than in the union of pure and affectionate hearts. St. Aubert smiled, and sighed at the romantic picture of felicity his fancy drew, and sighed again to think that nature and simplicity were so little known to the world as that their pleasures were thought romantic.

“The world,” said he, pursuing this train of thought, “ridicules a passion which it seldom feels: its scenes and its interests distract the mind, deprave the taste, corrupt the heart; and love cannot exist in a heart that has lost the meek dignity of innocence. Virtue and taste are nearly the same; for virtue is little more than active taste; and the most delicate affections of each combine in real love. How then are we to look for love in great cities, where selfishness, dissipation, and insincerity supply the place of tenderness, simplicity, and truth?”

It was near noon, when the travellers, having arrived at a piece of steep and dangerous road, alighted to walk. The road wound up an ascent that was clothed with wood, and instead of following the carriage, they entered the refreshing shade. A dewy coolness was diffused upon the air, which, with the bright verdure of turf that grew under the trees, the mingled fragrance of flowers and of balm, thyme, and lavender that enriched it,

and the grandeur of the pines, beech, and chestnuts that overshadowed them, rendered this a most delicious retreat. Sometimes the thick foliage excluded all view of the country; at others it admitted some partial catches of the distant scenery which gave hints to the imagination to picture landscapes more interesting, more impressive than any that had been presented to the eye. The wanderers often lingered to indulge in these reveries of fancy.

The pauses of silence, such as had formerly interrupted the conversations of Valancourt and Emily, were more frequent to-day than ever. Valancourt often dropped suddenly from the most animating vivacity into fits of deep musing; and there was sometimes an unaffected melancholy in his smile, which Emily could not avoid understanding, for her heart was interested in the sentiment it spoke.

St. Aubert was refreshed by the shades, and they continued to saunter under them, following as nearly as they could guess the direction of the road till they perceived that they had totally lost it. They had continued near the brow of the precipice, allured by the scenery it exhibited, while the road wound far away over the cliff above. Valancourt called loudly to Michael, but heard no voice, except his own echoing among the rocks, and his various efforts to regain the road were equally unsuccessful. While they were thus circumstanced, they perceived a shepherd's cabin between the boles of the trees at some distance, and Valancourt bounded on first to ask assistance. When he reached it, he saw only two little children at play on the turf before the door. He looked into the hut, but no person was there; and the eldest of the boys told him that their father was with his flocks, and their mother was gone down into the vale, but would be back presently. As he stood considering what was further to be done, on a sudden he heard Michael's voice roaring forth most manfully among the cliffs above, till he made their echoes ring. Valancourt immediately answered the call, and endeavoured to make his way through the thicket that clothed the steeps, following the direction of the sound. After much struggle over brambles and precipices, he reached Michael, and at length prevailed with him to be silent, and to listen to him. The road was at a considerable distance from the spot where St. Aubert and Emily were; the carriage could not easily return to the entrance of the wood; and since it would be very fatiguing for St. Aubert to climb the long and steep road to the place where it now stood, Valancourt was anxious to find a more easy ascent by the way he had himself passed.

Meanwhile St. Aubert and Emily approached the cottage, and rested themselves on a rustic bench fastened between two pines which overshadowed it, till Valancourt, whose steps they had observed, should return.

The eldest of the children desisted from his play, and stood still to observe the strangers, while the younger continued his little gambols, and teased his brother to join in them. St. Aubert looked with pleasure upon this picture of infantine simplicity till it brought to his remembrance his own boys, whom he had lost about the age of these, and their lamented mother; and he sunk into a thoughtfulness; which Emily observing, she immediately began to sing one of those simple and lively airs he was so fond of, and which she knew how to give with the most captivating sweetness. St. Aubert smiled on her through his tears, took her hand and pressed it affectionately, and then tried to dissipate the melancholy reflections that lingered in his mind.

While she sung, Valancourt approached, who was unwilling to interrupt her, and paused at a little distance to listen. When she had concluded, he joined the party, and told them that he had found Michael, as well as a way by which he thought they could ascend the cliff to the carriage. He pointed to the woody steeps above, which St. Aubert surveyed with an anxious eye. He was already wearied by his walk, and this ascent was formidable to him. He thought, however, it would be less toilsome than the long and broken road, and he determined to attempt it; but Emily, ever watchful of his ease, proposing that he should rest and dine before they proceeded farther, Valancourt went to the carriage for the refreshments deposited there.

On his return, he proposed removing a little higher up the mountain, to where the woods opened upon a grand and extensive prospect; and thither they were preparing to go, when they saw a young woman join the children, and caress and weep over them.

The travellers, interested by her distress, stopped to observe her. She took the youngest of the children in her arms, and, perceiving the strangers, hastily dried her tears and proceeded to the cottage. St. Aubert, on inquiring the occasion of her sorrow, learned that her husband, who was a shepherd, and lived here in the summer months to watch over the flocks he led to feed upon these mountains, had lost on the preceding night his little all. A gang of gipsies, who had for some time infested the neighbourhood, had driven away several of his master's

sheep. "Jacques," added the shepherd's wife, "had saved a little money, and had bought a few sheep with it, and now they must go to his master for those that are stolen; and what is worse than all, his master, when he comes to know how it is, will trust him no longer with the care of his flocks, for he is a hard man; and then what is to become of our children?"

The innocent countenance of the woman, and the simplicity of her manner in relating her grievance, inclined St. Aubert to believe her story; and Valancourt, convinced that it was true, asked eagerly what was the value of the stolen sheep; on hearing which he turned away with a look of disappointment. St. Aubert put some money into her hand; Emily too gave something from her little purse, and they walked towards the cliff; but Valancourt lingered behind, and spoke to the shepherd's wife, who was now weeping with gratitude and surprise. He inquired how much money was yet wanting to replace the stolen sheep, and found that it was a sum very little short of all he had about him. He was perplexed and distressed.

"This sum, then," said he to himself, "would make this poor family completely happy—it is in my power to give it—to make them completely happy! But what is to become of me?—how shall I contrive to reach home with the little money that will remain?"

For a moment he stood, unwilling to forgo the luxury of raising a family from ruin to happiness, yet considering the difficulties of pursuing his journey with so small a sum as would be left.

While he was in this state of perplexity, the shepherd himself appeared: his children ran to meet him; he took one of them in his arms, and, with the other clinging to his coat, came forward with a loitering step. His forlorn and melancholy look determined Valancourt at once; he threw down all the money he had, except a very few louis, and bounded away after St. Aubert and Emily, who were proceeding slowly up the steep. Valancourt had seldom felt his heart so light as at this moment; his gay spirits danced with pleasure; every object around him appeared more interesting or beautiful than before. St. Aubert observed the uncommon vivacity of his countenance.

"What has pleased you so much?" said he.

"Oh, what a lovely day!" replied Valancourt; "how brightly the sun shines! how pure is this air! what enchanting scenery!"

"It is indeed enchanting," said St. Aubert, whom early experience had taught to understand the nature of Valancourt's

present feelings. "What pity that the wealthy who can command such sunshine should ever pass their days in gloom—in the cold shade of selfishness! For you, my young friend, may the sun always shine as brightly as at this moment! may your own conduct always give you the sunshine of benevolence and reason united!"

Valancourt, highly flattered by this compliment, could make no reply but by a smile of gratitude.

They continued to wind under the woods, between the grassy knolls of the mountain, and as they reached the shady summit which he had pointed out, the whole party burst into an exclamation. Behind the spot where they stood, the rock rose perpendicularly in a massy wall to a considerable height, and then branched out into overhanging crags. Their grey tints were well contrasted by the bright hues of the plants and wild flowers that grew in their fractured sides, and were deepened by the gloom of the pines and cedars that waved above. The steeps below, over which the eye passed abruptly to the valley, were fringed with thickets of alpine shrubs; and lower still appeared the tufted tops of the chestnut woods that clothed their base—among which peeped forth the shepherd's cottage just left by the travellers, with its bluish smoke curling high in the air. On every side appeared the majestic summits of the Pyrenees; some exhibiting tremendous crags of marble, whose appearance was changing every instant as the varying lights fell upon their surface; others, still higher, displaying only snowy points, while their lower steeps were covered almost invariably with forests of pine, larch, and oak, that stretched down to the vale. This was one of the narrow valleys that open from the Pyrenees into the country of Roussillon, and whose green pastures and cultivated beauty form a decided and wonderful contrast to the romantic grandeur that environs it. Through a vista of the mountains appeared the lowlands of Roussillon, tinted with the blue haze of distance, as they united with the waters of the Mediterranean; where, on a promontory which marked the boundary of the shore, stood a lonely beacon, over which were seen circling flights of sea-fowl. Beyond appeared now and then a stealing sail, white with the sunbeam, and whose progress was perceivable by its approach to the lighthouse. Sometimes, too, was seen a sail so distant, that it served only to mark the line of separation between the sky and the waves.

On the other side of the valley, immediately opposite to the spot where the travellers rested, a rocky pass opened towards

Gascony. Here no sign of cultivation appeared. The rocks of granite that screened the glen rose abruptly from their base, and stretched their barren points to the clouds, unvaried with woods, and uncheered even by a hunter's cabin. Sometimes, indeed, a gigantic larch threw its long shade over the precipice, and here and there a cliff reared on its brow a monumental cross, to tell the traveller the fate of him who had ventured thither before. This spot seemed the very haunt of banditti; and Emily, as she looked down upon it, almost expected to see them stealing out from some hollow cave to look for their prey. Soon after an object not less terrific struck her—a gibbet, standing on a point of rock near the entrance of the pass, and immediately over one of the crosses she had before observed. These were hieroglyphics that told a plain and dreadful story. She forbore to point it out to St. Aubert; but it threw a gloom over her spirits, and made her anxious to hasten forward, that they might with certainty reach Roussillon before nightfall. It was necessary, however, that St. Aubert should take some refreshment; and seating themselves on the short dry turf, they opened the basket of provisions, while

by breezy murmurs cool'd,
 Broad-o'er ~~their~~ heads, the verdant cedars wave,
 And high palmietos lift their graceful shade.

Late Prof. S. Mex. Tezpal
 Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales,
 Profusely breathing from the piney groves,
 And vales of fragrance; there at distance hear
 The roaring floods and cataracts.

THOMSON.

St. Aubert was revived by rest, and by the serene air of this summit; and Valancourt was so charmed with all around, and with the conversation of his companions, that he seemed to have forgotten he had any farther to go. Having concluded their simple repast, they gave a long farewell look to the scene, and again began to ascend. St. Aubert rejoiced when he reached the carriage, which Emily entered with him; but Valancourt, willing to take a more extensive view of the enchanting country, into which they were about to descend, than he could do from a carriage, loosened his dogs, and once more bounded with them along the banks of the road. He often quitted it for points that promised a wider prospect; and the slow pace at which the mules travelled allowed him to overtake them with ease. Whenever

a scene of uncommon magnificence appeared, he hastened to inform St. Aubert, who, though he was too much tired to walk himself, sometimes made the chaise wait, while Emily went to the neighbouring cliff.

It was evening when they descended the lower Alps that bind Roussillon and form a majestic barrier round that charming country, leaving it open only on the east to the Mediterranean. The gay tints of cultivation once more beautified the landscape; for the lowlands were coloured with the richest hues which a luxuriant climate and an industrious people can awaken into life. Groves of orange and lemon perfumed the air, their ripe fruit glowing among the foliage; while, sloping to the plains, extensive vineyards spread their treasures. Beyond these, woods and pastures, and mingled towns and hamlets, stretched towards the sea, on whose bright surface gleamed many a distant sail; while over the whole scene was diffused the purple glow of evening. This landscape, with the surrounding Alps, did indeed present a perfect picture of the lovely and the sublime—of “beauty sleeping in the lap of horror.”

The travellers, having reached the plains, proceeded between hedges of flowering myrtle and pomegranate to the town of Arles, where they proposed to rest for the night. They met with simple but neat accommodation, and would have passed a happy evening, after the toils and the delights of this day, had not the approaching separation thrown a gloom over their spirits. It was St. Aubert's plan to proceed on the morrow to the borders of the Mediterranean, and travel along its shores into Languedoc; and Valancourt, since he was now nearly recovered, and had no longer a pretence for continuing with his new friends, resolved to leave them here. St. Aubert, who was much pleased with him, invited him to go farther, but did not repeat the invitation; and Valancourt had resolution enough to forgo the temptation of accepting it, that he might prove himself not unworthy of the favour. On the following morning, therefore, they were to part; St. Aubert to pursue his way to Languedoc, and Valancourt to explore new scenes among the mountains, on his return home. During this evening he was often silent and thoughtful; St. Aubert's manner towards him was affectionate, though grave; and Emily was serious, though she made frequent efforts to appear cheerful. After one of the most melancholy evenings they had yet passed together, they separated for the night.

CHAPTER VI

I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace,
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns, by living stream at eve:
Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
And I their toys to the great children leave:
Of fancy, reason, virtue, naught can me bereave.

THOMSON.

In the morning Valancourt breakfasted with St. Aubert and Emily, neither of whom seemed much refreshed by sleep. The anguor of illness still hung over St. Aubert, and to Emily's fears his disorder appeared to be increasing fast upon him. She watched his looks with anxious affection, and their expression was always faithfully reflected in her own.

At the commencement of their acquaintance, Valancourt had made known his name and family. St. Aubert was not a stranger to either; for the family estates, which were now in the possession of an elder brother of Valancourt, were little more than twenty miles distant from La Vallée, and he had sometimes met the elder Valancourt on visits in the neighbourhood. This knowledge had made him more willingly receive his present companion; for, though his countenance and manners would have won him the acquaintance of St. Aubert, who was very apt to trust to the intelligence of his own eyes with respect to countenances, he would not have accepted these as sufficient introductions to that of his daughter.

The breakfast was almost as silent as the supper of the preceding night; but their musing was at length interrupted by the sound of the carriage wheels which were to bear away St. Aubert and family. Valancourt started from his chair, and went to the window; it was indeed the carriage, and he returned to his seat without speaking. The moment was now come when they must part. St. Aubert told Valancourt that he hoped he would never pass La Vallée without favouring him with a visit; and Valancourt, eagerly thanking him, assured him that he never would; as he said which he looked timidly at Emily, who tried to smile away the seriousness of her spirits. They passed a few minutes in an interesting conversation, and St. Aubert then led the way to the carriage, Emily and Valancourt following in silence. The latter

lingered at the door several minutes after they were seated, and none of the party seemed to have courage enough to say—Farewell! At length St. Aubert pronounced the melancholy word, which Emily passed to Valancourt, who returned it with a dejected smile, and the carriage drove on.

The travellers remained for some time in a state of tranquil pensiveness which is not displeasing.

St. Aubert interrupted it by observing: “This is a very promising young man; it is many years since I have been so much pleased with any person, on so short an acquaintance. He brings back to my memory the days of my youth, when every scene was new and delightful!” St. Aubert sighed, and sunk again into a reverie; and as Emily looked back upon the road they had passed, Valancourt was seen, at the door of the little inn, following them with his eyes. He perceived her, and waved his hand; and she returned the adieu till the winding road shut her from his sight.

“I remember when I was about his age,” resumed St. Aubert; “and I thought and felt exactly as he does. The world was *opening upon me then; now—it is closing.*”

“My dear sir, do not think so gloomily,” said Emily in a trembling voice; “I hope you have many, many years to live—for your own sake—for *my* sake.”

“Ah, my Emily!” replied St. Aubert, “for thy sake! Well—I hope it is so.”

He wiped away a tear that was stealing down his cheek, threw a smile upon his countenance, and said in a cheering voice:

“There is something in the ardour and ingenuousness of youth, which is particularly pleasing to the contemplation of an old man, if his feelings have not been entirely corroded by the world. It is cheering and reviving, like the view of spring to a sick person; his mind catches somewhat of the spirit of the season, and his eyes are lighted up with the transient sunshine. Valancourt is this spring to me.”

Emily, who pressed her father’s hand affectionately, had never before listened with so much pleasure to the praises he bestowed; no, not even when he had bestowed them on herself.

They travelled on, among vineyards, woods, and pastures, delighted with the romantic beauty of the landscape, which was bounded on one side by the grandeur of the Pyrenees, and on the other by the ocean; and soon after noon they reached the town of Collioure, situated on the Mediterranean. Here they dined, and rested till towards the cool of day, when they pursued

their way along the shores—those enchanting shores!—which extend to Languedoc.

Emily gazed with enthusiasm on the vastness of the sea, its surface varying as the lights and shadows fell, and on its woody banks mellowed with autumnal tints.

St. Aubert was impatient to reach Perpignan, where he expected letters from M. Quesnel; and it was the expectation of these letters that had induced him to leave Collioure, for his feeble frame had required immediate rest.

After travelling a few miles, he fell asleep; and Emily, who had put two or three books into the carriage on leaving La Vallée, had now the leisure for looking into them. She sought for one in which Valancourt had been reading the day before, and hoped for the pleasure of retracing a page over which the eyes of a beloved friend had lately passed, of dwelling on the passages which he had admired, and of permitting them to speak to her in the language of his own mind, and to bring himself to her presence. On searching for the book she could find it nowhere, but in its stead perceived a volume of Petrarch's poems, that had belonged to Valancourt, whose name was written in it, and from which he had frequently read passages to her with all the pathetic expression that characterized the feelings of the author.

She hesitated in believing, what would have been sufficiently apparent to almost any other person, that he had purposely left this book instead of the one she had lost, and that love had prompted the exchange; but having opened it with impatient pleasure, and observed the lines of his pencil drawn along the various passages he had read aloud, and under others more descriptive of delicate tenderness than he had dared to trust his voice with, the conviction came at length to her mind.

For some moments she was conscious only of being beloved; then, the recollection of all the variations of tone and countenance with which he had recited these sonnets, and of the soul which spoke in their expression, pressed to her memory, and she wept over the memorial of his affection.

They arrived at Perpignan soon after sunset, where St. Aubert found, as he had expected, letters from M. Quesnel; the contents of which so evidently and grievously affected him, that Emily was alarmed, and pressed him, as far as her delicacy would permit, to disclose the occasion of his concern: but he answered her only by tears, and immediately began to talk on other topics.

Emily, though she forbore to press the one most interesting

to her, was greatly affected by her father's manner, and passed a night of sleepless solicitude.

In the morning they pursued their journey along the coast towards Leucate, another town on the Mediterranean, situated on the borders of Languedoc and Roussillon.

On the way, Emily renewed the subject of the preceding night, and appeared so deeply affected by St. Aubert's silence and dejection, that he relaxed from his reserve.

"I was unwilling, my dear Emily," said he, "to throw a cloud over the pleasure you receive from these scenes, and meant, therefore, to conceal for the present some circumstances, with which, however, you must at length have been made acquainted. But your anxiety has defeated my purpose; you suffer as much from this, perhaps, as you will do from a knowledge of the facts I have to relate.

"M. Quesnel's visit proved an unhappy one to me; he came to tell me part of the news he has confirmed. You may have heard me mention a M. Motteville of Paris, but you did not know that the chief of my personal property was invested in his hands.

"I had great confidence in him, and I am yet willing to believe that he is not wholly unworthy of my esteem. A variety of circumstances have concurred to ruin him, and—I am ruined with him."

St. Aubert paused to conceal his emotion.

"The letters I have just received from M. Quesnel," resumed he, struggling to speak with firmness, "enclosed others from Motteville, which confirmed all I dreaded."

"Must we then quit La Vallée?" said Emily, after a long pause of silence.

"That is yet uncertain," replied St. Aubert; "it will depend upon the compromise Motteville is able to make with his creditors. My income, you know, was never large, and now it will be reduced to little indeed! It is for you, Emily—for you, my child—that I am most afflicted." His last words faltered.

Emily smiled tenderly upon him through her tears, and then, endeavouring to overcome her emotion:

"My dear father," said she, "do not grieve for me, or for yourself; we may yet be happy;—if La Vallée remains for us, we must be happy. We will retain only one servant, and you shall scarcely perceive the change in your income. Be comforted, my dear sir, we shall not feel the want of those luxuries which others value so highly, since we never had a taste for them; and poverty cannot deprive us of many consolations; it cannot

rob us of the affection we have for each other, or degrade us in our own opinion, or in that of any person whose opinion we ought to value."

St. Aubert concealed his face with his handkerchief, and was unable to speak; but Emily continued to urge to her father the truths which himself had impressed upon her mind.

"Besides, my dear sir, poverty cannot deprive us of intellectual delights. It cannot deprive you of the comfort of affording me examples of fortitude and benevolence, nor me of the delight of consoling a beloved parent. It cannot deaden our taste for the grand and the beautiful, nor deny us the means of indulging it; for the scenes of nature—those sublime spectacles, so infinitely superior to all artificial luxuries!—are open for the enjoyment of the poor as well as of the rich. Of what, then, have we to complain, so long as we are not in want of necessities? Pleasures, such as wealth cannot buy, will still be ours. We retain, then, the sublime luxuries of nature, and lose only the frivolous ones of art."

St. Aubert could not reply; he caught Emily to his bosom, their tears flowed together; but—they were not tears of sorrow. After this language of the heart, all other would have been feeble, and they remained silent for some time. Then St. Aubert conversed as before; for, if his mind had not recovered its natural tranquillity, it at least assumed the appearance of it.

They reached the romantic town of Leucate early in the day; but St. Aubert was weary, and they determined to pass the night there. In the evening he exerted himself so far as to walk with his daughter to view the environs, that overlook the lake of Leucate, the Mediterranean, part of Roussillon, with the Pyrenees, and a wide extent of the luxuriant province of Languedoc, now blushing with the ripened vintage which the peasants were beginning to gather. St. Aubert and Emily saw the busy groups, caught the joyous song that was wafted on the breeze, and anticipated with apparent pleasure their next day's journey over this gay region. He designed, however, still to wind along the seashore. To return home immediately was partly his wish; but from this he was withheld by a desire to lengthen the pleasure which the journey gave his daughter, and to try the effect of the sea air on his own disorder.

On the following day, therefore, they recommenced their journey through Languedoc, winding the shores of the Mediterranean; the Pyrenees still forming the magnificent background of their prospects, while on their right was the ocean, and on

their left, wide extended plains melting into the blue horizon. St. Aubert was pleased, and conversed much with Emily; yet his cheerfulness was sometimes artificial, and sometimes a shade of melancholy would steal upon his countenance and betray him. This was soon chased away by Emily's smile; who smiled, however with an aching heart, for she saw that his misfortunes preyed upon his mind and upon his enfeebled frame.

It was evening when they reached a small village of Upper Languedoc, where they meant to pass the night, but the place could not afford them beds; for here it was the time of the vintage; and they were obliged to proceed to the next post. The languor of illness and of fatigue, which returned upon St. Aubert, required immediate repose, and the evening was now far advanced; but from necessity there was no appeal, and he ordered Michael to proceed.

The rich plains of Languedoc, which exhibited all the glories of the vintage, with the gaieties of a French festival, no longer awakened St. Aubert to pleasure, whose condition formed a mournful contrast to the hilarity and youthful beauty which surrounded him. As his languid eyes moved over the scene, he considered that they would soon, perhaps, be closed for ever on this world.

"Those distant and sublime mountains," said he secretly, as he gazed on a chain of the Pyrenees that stretched towards the west, "these luxuriant plains, this blue vault, the cheerful light of day, will be shut from my eyes! The song of the peasant—the cheering voice of man—will no longer sound for me!"

The intelligent eyes of Emily seemed to read what passed in the mind of her father, and she fixed them on his face with an expression of such tender pity as recalled his thoughts from every desultory object of regret, and he remembered only that he must leave his daughter without protection. This reflection changed regret to agony; he sighed deeply, and remained silent, while she seemed to understand that sigh, for she pressed his hand affectionately, and then turned to the window to conceal her tears. The sun now threw a last yellow gleam on the waves of the Mediterranean, and the gloom of twilight spread fast over the scene, till only a melancholy ray appeared on the western horizon, marking the point where the sun had set amid the vapours of an autumnal evening. A cool breeze now came from the shore, and Emily let down the glass; but the air which was refreshing to health, was as chilling to sickness, and St. Aubert desired that the window might be drawn up. Increasing illness

made him now more anxious than ever to finish the day's journey, and he stopped the muleteer to inquire how far they had yet to go to the next post.

He replied, "Nine miles."

"I feel I am unable to proceed much farther," said St. Aubert; "inquire as you go, if there is any house on the road that would accommodate us for the night."

He sunk back in the carriage, and Michael, cracking his whip in the air, set off, and continued on the full gallop, till St. Aubert, almost fainting, called to him to stop. Emily looked anxiously from the window, and saw a peasant walking at some little distance on the road, for whom they waited till he came up, when he was asked if there was any house in the neighbourhood that accommodated travellers.

He replied that he knew of none. "There is a château, indeed, among those woods on the right," added he, "but I believe it receives nobody, and I cannot show you the way, for I am almost a stranger here."

St. Aubert was going to ask him some further question concerning the château, but the man abruptly passed on. After some consideration, he ordered Michael to proceed slowly to the woods. Every moment now deepened the twilight and increased the difficulty of finding the road. Another peasant soon after passed.

"Which is the way to the château in the woods?" cried Michael.

"The château in the woods!" exclaimed the peasant—"Do you mean that with the turret yonder?"

"I don't know as for the turret, as you call it," said Michael; "I mean that white piece of a building that we see at a distance there, among the trees."

"Yes, that is the turret; why, who are you, that you are going thither?" said the man with surprise.

St. Aubert, on hearing this odd question, and observing the peculiar tone in which it was delivered, looked out from the carriage.

"We are travellers," said he, "who are in search of a house of accommodation for the night; is there any hereabout?"

"None, monsieur, unless you have a mind to try your luck yonder," replied the peasant, pointing to the woods; "but I would not advise you to go there."

"To whom does the château belong?"

"I scarcely know myself, monsieur."

"It is uninhabited, then?"

"No, not uninhabited; the steward and housekeeper are there, I believe."

On hearing this, St. Aubert determined to proceed to the château, and risk the refusal of being accommodated for the night: he therefore desired the countryman would show Michael the way, and bade him expect reward for his trouble. The man was for a moment silent, and then said that he was going on other business, but that the road could not be missed, if they went up an avenue to the right, to which he pointed. St. Aubert was going to speak, but the peasant wished him good night, and walked on.

The carriage now moved towards the avenue, which was guarded by a gate; and Michael having dismounted to open it, they entered between rows of ancient oak and chestnut, whose intermingled branches formed a lofty arch above. There was something so gloomy and desolate in the appearance of this avenue and its lonely silence, that Emily almost shuddered as she passed along; and recollecting the manner in which the peasant had mentioned the château, she gave a mysterious meaning to his words, such as she had not suspected when he uttered them. These apprehensions, however, she tried to check, considering that they were probably the effect of a melancholy imagination, which her own circumstances had made sensible to every impression.

They passed slowly on, for they were now almost in darkness, which, together with the unevenness of the ground, and the frequent roots of old trees that shot up above the soil, made it necessary to proceed with caution. On a sudden Michael stopped the carriage; and as St. Aubert looked from the window to inquire the cause, he perceived a figure at some distance moving up the avenue. The dusk would not permit him to distinguish what it was, but he bade Michael go on.

"This seems a wild place," said Michael; "there is no house hereabout; don't your honour think we had better turn back?"

"Go a little farther, and if we see no house then, we will return to the road," replied St. Aubert.

Michael proceeded with reluctance; and the extreme slowness of his pace made St. Aubert look again from the window to hasten him, when again he saw the same figure. He was somewhat startled; probably the gloominess of the spot made him more liable to alarm than usual. However this might be, he now stopped Michael, and bade him call to the person in the avenue.

"Please your honour, he may be a robber," said Michael.

"It does not please me," replied St. Aubert, who could not forbear smiling at the simplicity of his phrase; "and we will therefore return to the road, for I see no probability of meeting here with what we seek."

Michael turned about immediately, and was retracing his way with alacrity, when a voice was heard from among the trees on the left. It was not the voice of command or distress; but a deep hollow tone, which seemed to be scarcely human. The man whipped his mules till they went as fast as possible, regardless of the darkness, the broken ground, and the necks of the whole party; nor once stopped till he reached the gate which opened from the avenue into the high road, where he went into a more moderate pace.

"I am very ill," said St. Aubert, taking his daughter's hand.

"You are worse, then, sir!" said Emily, extremely alarmed by his manner; "you are worse, and here is no assistance! Good God! what is to be done?"

He leaned his head on her shoulder, while she endeavoured to support him with her arm; and Michael was again ordered to stop. When the rattling of the wheels had ceased, music was heard on the air: it was to Emily the voice of Hope.

"Oh! we are near some human habitation!" said she: "help may soon be had."

She listened anxiously; the sounds were distant, and seemed to come from a remote part of the woods that bordered the road; and as she looked towards the spot whence they issued, she perceived in the faint moonlight something like a château. It was difficult, however, to reach this. St. Aubert was now too ill to bear the motion of the carriage; Michael could not quit his mules; and Emily, who still supported her father, feared to leave him, and also feared to venture alone to such a distance, she knew not whither, or to whom. Something, however, it was necessary to determine upon immediately: St. Aubert, therefore, told Michael to proceed slowly; but they had not gone far, when he fainted, and the carriage was again stopped. He lay quite senseless.

"My dear, dear father!" cried Emily in great agony, who began to fear that he was dying; "speak, if it is only one word, to let me hear the sound of your voice!"

But no voice spoke in reply. In the agony of terror she bade Michael bring water from the rivulet that flowed along the road; and having received some in the man's hat, with trembling hands,

she sprinkled it over her father's face, which, as the moon's rays now fell upon it, seemed to bear the impression of death. Every emotion of selfish fear now gave way to a stronger influence; and committing St. Aubert to the care of Michael, who refused to go far from his mules, she stepped from the carriage in search of the château she had seen at a distance. It was a still moonlight night, and the music, which yet sounded on the air, directed her steps from the high road up a shadowy lane that led to the woods. Her mind was for some time so entirely occupied by anxiety and terror for her father, that she felt none for herself, till the deepening gloom of the overhanging foliage, which now wholly excluded the moonlight, and the wildness of the place, recalled her to a sense of her adventurous situation. The music had ceased, and she had no guide but chance. For a moment she paused in terrified perplexity; till a sense of her father's condition again overcoming every consideration for herself, she proceeded. The lane terminated in the woods; but she looked round in vain for a house or a human being, and as vainly listened for a sound to guide her. She hurried on, however, not knowing whither, avoiding the recesses of the woods, and endeavouring to keep along their margin, till a rude kind of avenue, which opened upon a moonlight spot, arrested her attention. The wildness of this avenue brought to her recollection the one leading to the turreted château, and she was inclined to believe that this was a part of the same domain, and probably led to the same point. While she hesitated whether to follow it or not, a sound of many voices in loud merriment burst upon her ear; it seemed not the laugh of cheerfulness but of riot; and she stood appalled. While she paused, she heard a distant voice calling from the way she had come, and not doubting but it was that of Michael, her first impulse was to hasten back; but a second thought changed her purpose—she believed that nothing less than the last extremity could have prevailed with Michael to quit his mules; and fearing that her father was now dying, she rushed forward, with a feeble hope of obtaining assistance from the people in the woods.

Her heart beat with fearful expectation as she drew near the spot whence the voices issued, and she often startled when her steps disturbed the fallen leaves. The sounds led her towards the moonlight glade she had before noticed; at a little distance from which she stopped, and saw between the boles of the trees a small circular level of green turf, surrounded by the woods, on which appeared a group of figures. On drawing nearer, she

distinguished these, by their dress, to be peasants, and perceived several cottages scattered round the edge of the woods, which waved loftily over this spot. While she gazed, and endeavoured to overcome the apprehensions that withheld her steps, several peasant girls came out of a cottage; music instantly struck up, and the dance began. It was the joyous music of the vintage—the same she had before heard upon the air. Her heart, occupied with terror for her father, could not feel the contrast which this gay scene offered to her own distress. She stepped hastily forwards towards a group of elder persons who were seated at the door of a cottage, and, having explained her situation, entreated their assistance. Several of them rose with alacrity, and, offering any service in their power, followed Emily, who seemed to move on the wind, as fast as they could towards the road.

When she reached the carriage she found St. Aubert restored to animation. On the recovery of his senses, having heard from Michael whither his daughter was gone, anxiety for her overcame every regard for himself, and he had sent him in search of her. He was, however, still languid; and perceiving himself unable to travel much farther, he renewed his inquiries for an inn, and concerning the château in the woods.

"The château cannot accommodate you, sir," said a venerable peasant who had followed Emily from the woods; "it is scarcely inhabited; but if you will do me the honour to visit my cottage, you shall be welcome to the best bed it affords."

St. Aubert was himself a Frenchman, he therefore was not surprised at French courtesy; but ill as he was, he felt the value of the offer enhanced by the manner which accompanied it. He had too much delicacy to apologize, or to appear to hesitate about availing himself of the peasant's hospitality; but immediately accepted it, with the same frankness with which it was offered.

The carriage again moved slowly on; Michael following the peasants up the lane which Emily had just quitted, till they came to the moonlight glade. St. Aubert's spirits were so far restored by the courtesy of his host and the near prospect of repose, that he looked with a sweet complacency upon the moonlight scene, surrounded by the shadowy woods, through which, here and there, an opening admitted the streaming splendour, discovering a cottage or a sparkling rivulet. He listened, with no painful emotion, to the merry notes of the guitar and tambourine; and though tears came to his eyes when he saw the *débonnaire* dance of the peasants, they were not merely tears

of mournful regret. With Emily it was otherwise: immediate terror for her father had now subsided into a gentle melancholy, which every note of joy, by awakening comparison, served to heighten.

The dance ceased on the approach of the carriage, which was a phenomenon in these sequestered woods, and the peasantry flocked round it with eager curiosity. On learning that it brought a sick stranger, several girls ran across the turf, and returned with wine and baskets of grapes, which they presented to the travellers—each with kind contention pressing for a preference.

At length the carriage stopped at a neat cottage; and his venerable conductor having assisted St. Aubert to alight, led him and Emily to a small inner room, illuminated only by moonbeams which the open casement admitted. St. Aubert, rejoicing in rest, seated himself in an arm-chair, and his senses were refreshed by the cool and balmy air that lightly waved the embowering honeysuckles, and wafted their sweet breath into the apartment. His host, who was called La Voisin, quitted the room, but soon returned with fruits, cream, and all the pastoral luxury his cottage afforded; having set down which with a smile of unfeigned welcome, he retired behind the chair of his guest. St. Aubert insisted on his taking a seat at the table; and when the fruit had allayed the fever of his palate, and he found himself somewhat revived, he began to converse with his host; who communicated several particulars concerning himself and his family, which were interesting because they were spoken from the heart, and delineated a picture of the sweet courtesies of family kindness. Emily sat by her father holding his hand; and while she listened to the old man, her heart swelled with the affectionate sympathy he described, and her tears fell to the mournful consideration that death would probably soon deprive her of the dearest blessing she then possessed. The soft moonlight of an autumnal evening, and the distant music which now sounded a plaintive strain, aided the melancholy of her mind. The old man continued to talk of his family, and St. Aubert remained silent.

"I have only one daughter living," said La Voisin, "but she is happily married, and is everything to me. When I lost my wife," he added with a sigh, "I came to live with Agnes and her family: she has several children, who are all dancing on the green yonder, as merry as grasshoppers—and long may they be so! I hope to die among them, monsieur. I am old now, and cannot

expect to live long: but there is some comfort in dying surrounded by one's children."

"My good friend," said St. Aubert, while his voice trembled, "I hope you will long live surrounded by them."

"Ah, sir! at my age I must not expect that!" replied the old man, and he paused. "I can scarcely wish it," he resumed; "for I trust that whenever I die I shall go to heaven, where my poor wife is gone before me: I can sometimes almost fancy I see her, of a still moonlight night, walking among these shades she loved so well. Do you believe, monsieur, that we shall be permitted to revisit the earth after we have quitted the body?"

Emily could no longer stifle the anguish of her heart; her tears fell fast upon her father's hand, which she yet held. He made an effort to speak, and at length said in a low voice:

"I hope we shall be permitted to look down on those we have left on the earth; but I can only hope it: futurity is much veiled from our eyes, and faith and hope are our only guides concerning it. We are not enjoined to believe that disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved, but we may innocently hope it. It is a hope which I will never resign," continued he, while he wiped the tears from his daughter's eyes: "it will sweeten the bitter moments of death!"

Tears fell slowly on his cheeks: La Voisin wept too; and there was a pause of silence. Then La Voisin, renewing the subject, said:

"But you believe, sir, that we shall meet in another world the relations we have loved in this? I must believe this."

"Then do believe it," replied St. Aubert; "severe, indeed, would be the pangs of separation, if we believed it to be eternal. Look up, my dear Emily, we shall meet again!" He lifted his eyes towards heaven, and a gleam of moonlight, which fell upon his countenance, discovered peace and resignation stealing on the lines of sorrow.

La Voisin felt that he had pursued the subject too far, and he dropped it, saying, "We are in darkness, I forgot to bring a light."

"No," said St. Aubert, "this is a light I love; sit down, my good friend. Emily, my love, I find myself better than I have been all day: this air refreshes me. I can enjoy this tranquil hour, and that music which floats so sweetly at a distance. Let me see you smile. Who touches that guitar so tastefully? Are there two instruments, or is it an echo I hear?"

"It is an echo, monsieur, I fancy. That guitar is often heard

at night, when all is still, but nobody knows who touches it; and it is sometimes accompanied by a voice so sweet and so sad, that one would almost think the woods were haunted."

"They certainly are haunted," said St. Aubert with a smile; "but I believe it is by mortals."

"I have sometimes heard it at midnight, when I could not sleep," rejoined La Voisin, not seeming to notice this remark, "almost under my window; and I never heard any music like it: it has often made me think of my poor wife till I cried. I have sometimes got up to the window, to look if I could see anybody; but as soon as I opened the casement, all was hushed, and nobody to be seen; and I have listened and listened, till I have been so timorous that even the trembling of the leaves in the breeze has made me start. They say it often comes to warn people of their death; but I have heard it these many years, and outlived the warning."

Emily, though she smiled at the mention of this ridiculous superstition, could not, in the present tone of her spirits, wholly resist its contagion.

"Well, but my good friend," said St. Aubert, "has nobody had courage to follow the sounds? If they had, they would probably have discovered who is the musician."

"Yes, sir, they have followed them some way into the woods; but the music has still retreated, and seemed as distant as ever; and the people have at last been afraid of being led into harm, and would go no farther. It is very seldom that I have heard these sounds so early in the evening; they usually come about midnight, when that bright planet, which is rising above the turret yonder, sets below the woods on the left."

"What turret?" asked St. Aubert, with quickness, "I see none."

"Your pardon, monsieur, you do see one indeed, for the moon shines full upon it—up the avenue yonder, a long way off: the château it belongs to is hid among the trees."

"Yes, my dear sir," said Emily, pointing; "don't you see something glitter above the dark woods? It is a vane, I fancy, which the rays fall upon."

"Oh, yes; I see what you mean. And whom does the château belong to?"

"The Marquis de Villeroi was its owner," replied La Voisin emphatically.

"Ah!" said St. Aubert, with a deep sigh, "are we then so near Le-Blanc?" He appeared much agitated.

"It used to be the Marquis's favourite residence," resumed La Voisin; "but he took a dislike to the place, and has not been there for many years. We have heard lately that he is dead, and that it is fallen into other hands."

St. Aubert, who had sat in deep musing, was roused by the last words. "Dead!" he exclaimed: "Good God! when did he die?"

"He is reported to have died about five weeks since," replied La Voisin. "Did you know the Marquis, sir?"

"This is very extraordinary!" said St. Aubert, without attending to the question.

"Why is it so, my dear sir?" said Emily, in a voice of timid curiosity.

He made no reply, but sunk again into a reverie; and in a few moments, when he seemed to have recovered himself, asked who had succeeded to the estates.

"I have forgot his title, monsieur," said La Voisin; "but my lord resides at Paris chiefly; I hear no talk of his coming hither."

"The château is shut up then still?"

"Why, little better, sir; the old housekeeper and her husband the steward have the care of it, but they live generally in a cottage hard by."

"The château is spacious, I suppose?" said Emily, "and must be desolate for the residence of only two persons."

"Desolate enough, mademoiselle," replied La Voisin: "I would not pass one night in the château for the value of the whole domain."

"What is that?" said St. Aubert, roused again from thoughtfulness. As his host repeated his last sentence, a groan escaped from St. Aubert, and then, as if anxious to prevent it from being noticed, he hastily asked La Voisin how long he had lived in this neighbourhood. "Almost from my childhood, sir," replied his host.

"You remember the late Marchioness, then?" said St. Aubert in an altered voice.

"Ah, monsieur!—that I do well. There are many besides me who remember her."

"Yes," said St. Aubert—"and I am one of those."

"Alas, sir! you remember then a most beautiful and excellent lady. She deserved a better fate."

Tears stood in St. Aubert's eyes.—"Enough," said he, in a voice almost stifled by the violence of his emotions—"it is enough, my friend."

Emily, though extremely surprised by her father's manner, forbore to express her feelings by any question.

La Voisin began to apologize, but St. Aubert interrupted him. "Apology is quite unnecessary," said he; "let us change the topic. You were speaking of the music we just now heard."

"I was, monsieur—but hark! it comes again; listen to that voice!" They were all silent:

At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose, like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air; that even Silence
Was took ere she was 'ware, and wish'd she might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still, to be so displaced.

MILTON.

In a few moments the voice died into air, and the instrument which had been heard before, sounded in low symphony.

St. Aubert now observed that it produced a tone much more full and melodious than that of a guitar, and still more melancholy and soft than the lute.

They continued to listen, but the sounds returned no more.

"This is strange!" said St. Aubert, at length interrupting the silence.

"Very strange!" said Emily.

"It is so," rejoined La Voisin: and they were again silent.

After a long pause, "It is now about eighteen years since I first heard that music," said La Voisin; "I remember it was on a fine summer's night, much like this, but later, that I was walking in the woods, and alone. I remember, too, that my spirits were very low, for one of my boys was ill, and we feared we should lose him. I had been watching at his bedside all the evening, while his mother slept; for she had sat up with him the night before. I had been watching, and went out for a little fresh air: the day had been very sultry. As I walked under the shades, and mused, I heard music at a distance, and thought it was Claude playing upon his flute, as he often did of a fine evening, at the cottage door. But when I came to a place where the trees opened (I shall never forget it!) and stood looking up at the north-lights, which shot up the heaven to a great height, I heard all of a sudden such sounds!—they came so as I cannot describe. It was like the music of angels; and I looked up again, almost expecting to see them in the sky. When I came home, I told what I had heard; but they laughed at me, and said it must be some of the shepherds playing on their pipes, and I

could not persuade them to the contrary. A few nights after, however, my wife herself heard the same sounds, and was as much surprised as I was; and Father Denis frightened her sadly, by saying that it was music come to warn her of her child's death, and that music often came to houses where there was a dying person."

Emily, on hearing this, shrunk with a superstitious dread entirely new to her, and could scarcely conceal her agitation from St. Aubert.

"But the boy lived, monsieur, in spite of Father Denis."

"Father Denis!" said St. Aubert, who had listened to "narrative old age" with patient attention. "Are we near a convent, then?"

"Yes, sir; the convent of St. Clair stands at no great distance—on the seashore yonder."

"Ah!" said St. Aubert, as if struck with some sudden remembrance. "The convent of St. Clair!"

Emily observed the clouds of grief, mingled with a faint expression of horror, gathering on his brow; his countenance became fixed, and, touched as it now was by the silver whiteness of the moonlight, he resembled one of those marble statues of a monument, which seem to bend in hopeless sorrow over the ashes of the dead, shown

. . . by the blunted light
That the dim moon through painted casements lends.

The Emigrants.

"But, my dear sir," said Emily, anxious to dissipate his thoughts, "you forget that repose is necessary to you. If our kind host will give me leave, I will prepare your bed, for I know how you like it to be made."

St. Aubert, recollecting himself, and smiling affectionately, desired she would not add to her fatigue by that attention; and La Voisin, whose consideration for his guest had been suspended by the interests which his own narrative had recalled, now started from his seat, and apologizing for not having called Agnes from the green, hurried out of the room.

In a few moments he returned with his daughter, a young woman of pleasing countenance, and Emily learned from her, what she had not before suspected—that, for their accommodation it was necessary part of La Voisin's family should leave their beds. She lamented this circumstance, but Agnes, by her reply, fully proved that she inherited at least a share of her father's

courteous hospitality. It was settled that some of her children and Michael should sleep in the neighbouring cottage.

"If I am better to-morrow, my dear," said St. Aubert, when Emily returned to him, "I mean to set out at an early hour, that we may rest during the heat of the day, and will travel towards home. In the present state of my health and spirits I cannot look on a longer journey with pleasure, and I am also very anxious to reach La Vallée."

Emily, though she also desired to return, was grieved at her father's sudden wish to do so, which she thought indicated a greater degree of indisposition than he would acknowledge.

St. Aubert now retired to rest, and Emily to her little chamber, but not to immediate repose; her thoughts returned to the late conversation concerning the state of departed spirits—a subject at this time particularly affecting to her, when she had every reason to believe that her dear father would ere long be numbered with them. She leaned pensively on the little open casement, and in deep thought fixed her eyes on the heaven, whose blue, unclouded concave was studded thick with stars, the worlds perhaps of spirits, unsphered of mortal mould. As her eyes wandered along the boundless ether her thoughts rose, as before, towards the sublimity of the Deity, and to the contemplation of futurity. No busy note of this world interrupted the course of her mind; the merry dance had ceased, and every cottager had retired to his home. The still air seemed scarcely to breathe upon the woods, and now and then the distant sound of a solitary sheep-bell, or of a closing casement, was all that broke on silence. At length even this hint of human being was heard no more. Elevated and enwrapt, while her eyes were often wet with tears of sublime devotion and solemn awe, she continued at the casement till the gloom of midnight hung over the earth, and the planet which La Voisin had pointed out sunk below the woods. She then recollected what he had said concerning this planet and the mysterious music, and as she lingered at the window, half hoping and half fearing that it would return, her mind was led to the remembrance of the extreme emotion her father had shown on mention of the Marquis de Villeroi's death, and of the fate of the Marchioness, and she felt strongly interested concerning the remote cause of this emotion. Her surprise and curiosity were indeed the greater, because she did not recollect ever to have heard [him mention the name of Villeroi.

No music, however, stole on the silence of the night, and Emily,

perceiving the lateness of the hour, returned to a sense of fatigue, remembered that she was to rise early in the morning, and withdrew from the window to repose.

CHAPTER VII

. . . Let those deplore their doom,
Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn.
But lofty souls can look beyond the tomb,
Can smile at fate, and wonder how they mourn.
Shall Spring to these sad scenes no more return?
Is yonder wave the sun's eternal bed?—
Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
And Spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead!

BEATTIE.

EMILY, called, as she had requested, at an early hour, awoke little refreshed by sleep, for uneasy dreams had pursued her, and marred the kindest blessing of the unhappy. But when she opened her casement, looked out upon the woods, bright with the morning sun, and inspired the pure air, her mind was soothed. The scene was filled with that cheering freshness which seems to breathe the very spirit of health, and she heard only sweet and *picturesque* sounds, if such an expression may be allowed—the *matin-bell* of a distant convent, the faint murmur of the sea waves, the song of birds, and the far-off low of cattle which she saw coming slowly on between the trunks of the trees. Struck with the circumstances of imagery around her, she indulged the pensive tranquillity which they inspired; and while she leaned on her window, waiting till St. Aubert should descend to breakfast, her ideas arranged themselves in the following lines:

THE FIRST HOUR OF MORNING

How sweet to wind the forest's tangled shade,
When early twilight, from the eastern bound,
Dawns on the sleeping landscape in the glade,
And fades as Morning spreads her blush around!

When every infant flower, that wept in night,
Lifts its chill head, soft glowing with a tear,
Expands its tender blossom to the light,
And gives its incense to the genial air.

How fresh the breeze that wafts the rich perfume,
And swells the melody of waking birds!
The hum of bees, beneath the verdant gloom!
And woodman's song! and low of distant herds!

Then, doubtful gleams the mountain's hoary head,
Seen through the parting foliage from afar,
And, farther still, the ocean's misty bed,
With fitting sails, that partial sunbeams share.

But vain the sylvan shade, the breath of May,
The voice of music floating on the gale,
And forms that beam through Morning's dewy veil,
If health no longer bid the heart be gay!

O balmy hour! 'tis thine her wealth to give;
Here spread her blush, and bid the parent live!

Emily now heard persons moving below in the cottage, and presently the voice of Michael, who was talking to his mules as he led them forth from a hut adjoining. As she left the room, St. Aubert, who was now risen, met her at the door, apparently as little restored by sleep as herself. She led him downstairs to the little parlour in which they had supped on the preceding night, where they found a neat breakfast set out, while the host and his daughter waited to bid them good-morrow.

"I envy you this cottage, my good friends," said St. Aubert as he met them; "it is so pleasant, so quiet, and so neat; and this air that one breathes—if anything could restore lost health, it would surely be this air."

La Voisin bowed gratefully, and replied, with the gallantry of a Frenchman, "Our cottage may be envied, sir, since you and mademoiselle have honoured it with your presence."

St. Aubert gave him a friendly smile for his compliment, and sat down to a table spread with cream, fruit, new cheese, butter, and coffee. Emily, who had observed her father with attention, and thought he looked very ill, endeavoured to persuade him to defer travelling till the afternoon; but he seemed very anxious to be at home, and his anxiety he expressed repeatedly and with an earnestness that was unusual with him. He now said he found himself as well as he had been of late, and that he could bear travelling better in the cool hour of the morning than at any other time. But while he was talking with his venerable host, and thanking him for his kind attentions, Emily observed his countenance change, and before she could reach him he fell back in his chair. In a few moments he recovered from the

sudden faintness that had come over him; but felt so ill that he perceived himself unable to set out; and having remained a little while, struggling against the pressure of indisposition, he begged he might be helped upstairs to bed. This request renewed all the terror which Emily had suffered on the preceding evening; but, though scarcely able to support herself under the sudden shock it gave her, she tried to conceal her apprehensions from St. Aubert, and gave her trembling arm to assist him to the door of his chamber.

When he was once more in bed, he desired that Emily, who was then weeping in her own room, might be called; and as she came, he waved his hand for every other person to quit the apartment. When they were alone, he held out his hand to her, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance, with an expression so full of tenderness and grief, that all her fortitude forsook her, and she burst into an agony of tears. St. Aubert seemed struggling to acquire firmness, but was still unable to speak; he could only press her hand, and check the tears that stood trembling in his eyes. At length he commanded his voice.

"My dear child," said he, trying to smile through his anguish, "my dear Emily!" and paused again. He raised his eyes to heaven, as if in prayer, and then, in a firmer tone, and with a look in which the tenderness of the father was dignified by the pious solemnity of the saint, he said, "My dear child, I would soften the painful truth I have to tell you, but I find myself quite unequal to the art. Alas! I would at this moment conceal it from you, but that it would be most cruel to deceive you. It cannot be long before we must part; let us talk of it, that our thoughts and our prayers may prepare us to bear it." His voice faltered, while Emily, still weeping, pressed his hand close to her heart, which swelled with a convulsive sigh; but she could not look up.

"Let me not waste these moments," said St. Aubert, recovering himself; "I have much to say. There is a circumstance of solemn consequence which I have to mention, and a solemn promise to obtain from you; when this is done I shall be easier. You have observed, my dear, how anxious I am to reach home, but know not all my reasons for this. Listen to what I am going to say. Yet stay, before I say more, give me this promise, a promise made to your dying father!"

St. Aubert was interrupted. Emily, struck by his last words, as if for the first time, with a conviction of his immediate danger, raised her head: her tears stopped; and, gazing at him for a

moment with an expression of unutterable anguish, a slight convulsion seized her, and she sunk senseless in her chair. St. Aubert's cries brought La Voisin and his daughter to the room, and they administered every means in their power to restore her, but, for a considerable time without effect. When she recovered, St. Aubert was so exhausted by the scene he had witnessed, that it was many minutes before he had strength to speak; he was, however, somewhat revived by a cordial which Emily gave him; and being again alone with her, he exerted himself to tranquillize her spirits, and to offer her all the comfort of which her situation admitted. She threw herself into his arms, wept on his neck; and grief made her so insensible to all he said, that he ceased to offer the alleviations which he himself could not, at this moment, feel, and mingled his silent tears with hers. Recalled at length to a sense of duty, she tried to spare her father from further view of her sufferings; and quitting his embrace, dried her tears, and said something which she meant for consolation.

"My dear Emily," replied St. Aubert, "my dear child, we must look up with humble confidence to that Being, who has protected and comforted us in every danger and in every affliction we have known; to whose eye every moment of our lives has been exposed; He will not, He does not, forsake us now; I feel His consolations in my heart. I shall leave you, my child, still in His care; and though I depart from this world, I shall still be in His presence. Nay, weep not again, my Emily. In death there is nothing new or surprising, since we all know that we are born to die; and nothing terrible to those who can confide in an all-powerful God. Had my life been spared now, after a very few years, in the course of nature, I must have resigned it: old age, with all its train of infirmity, its privations and its sorrows, would have been mine; and then, at last, death would have come, and called forth the tears you now shed. Rather, my child, rejoice that I am saved from such suffering, and that I am permitted to die with a mind unimpaired, and sensible of the comforts of faith and of resignation."

St. Aubert paused, fatigued with speaking. Emily again endeavoured to assume an air of composure; and, in replying to what he had said, tried to soothe him with the belief that he had not spoken in vain.

When he had reposed awhile he resumed the conversation.

"Let me return," said he, "to a subject which is very near my heart. I said I had a solemn promise to receive from you; let me

receive it now, before I explain the chief circumstance which it concerns; there are others, of which your peace requires that you should rest in ignorance. Promise, then, that you will perform exactly what I shall enjoin."

Emily, awed by the earnest solemnity of his manner, dried her tears, that had begun again to flow in spite of her efforts to suppress them, and, looking eloquently at St. Aubert, bound herself to do whatever he should require, by a vow, at which she shuddered, yet knew not why.

He proceeded:

"I know you too well, my Emily, to believe that you would break any promise, much less one thus solemnly given; your assurance gives me peace, and the observance of it is of the utmost importance to your tranquillity. Hear, then, what I am going to tell you. The closet which adjoins my chamber at La Vallée has a sliding board in the floor: you will know it by a remarkable knot in the wood, and by its being the next board, except one, to the wainscot which fronts the door. At the distance of about a yard from that end, nearer the window, you will perceive a line across it, as if the plank had been joined. The way to open it is this: press your foot upon the line; the end of the board will then sink, and you may slide it with ease beneath the other. Below, you will see a hollow place." St. Aubert paused for breath, and Emily sat fixed in deep attention. "Do you understand these directions, my dear?" said he. Emily, though scarcely able to speak, assured him that she did.

"When you return home, then," he added with a deep sigh—

At the mention of her return home, all the melancholy circumstances that must attend this return rushed upon her fancy; she burst into convulsive grief; and St. Aubert himself, affected beyond the resistance of the fortitude which he had at first summoned, wept with her.

After some moments he composed himself.

"My dear child," said he, "be comforted. When I am gone, you will not be forsaken—I leave you only in the more immediate care of that Providence which has never yet forsaken me. Do not afflict me with this excess of grief; rather teach me by your example to bear my own." He stopped again; and Emily, the more she endeavoured to restrain her emotion, found it the less possible to do so.

St. Aubert, who now spoke with pain, resumed the subject. "That closet, my dear,—when you return home, go to it; and beneath the board I have described you will find a packet of

written papers. Attend to me now, for the promise you have given particularly relates to what I shall direct. These papers you must burn—and, solemnly I command you, *without examining them.*”

Emily's surprise for a moment overcame her grief, and she ventured to ask why this must be.

St. Aubert replied, that, if it had been right for him to explain his reasons, her late promise would have been unnecessarily exacted. “It is sufficient for you, my love, to have a deep sense of the importance of observing me in this instance.”

St. Aubert proceeded: “Under that board you will also find about two hundred louis-d'ors wrapped in a silk purse. Indeed, it was to secure whatever money might be in the château, that this secret place was contrived, at a time when the province was overrun by troops of men who took advantage of the tumults and became plunderers.

“But I have yet another promise to receive from you, which is—that you will never, whatever may be your future circumstances, *sell* the château.” St. Aubert even enjoined her, whenever she might marry, to make it an article in her contract, that the château should always be hers.

He then gave her a more minute account of his present circumstances than he had yet done; adding, “The two hundred louis, with what money you will now find in my purse, is all the ready money I have to leave you. I have told you how I am circumstanced with M. Motteville at Paris. Ah, my child! I leave you poor—but not destitute,” he added, after a long pause.

Emily could make no reply to anything he now said, but kneeled at the bedside, with her face upon the quilt, weeping over the hands he held there.

After this conversation the mind of St. Aubert appeared to be much more at ease: but exhausted by the effort of speaking, he sunk into a kind of doze; and Emily continued to watch and weep beside him, till a gentle tap at the chamber-door roused her.

It was La Voisin, come to say that a confessor from the neighbouring convent was below, ready to attend St. Aubert. Emily would not suffer her father to be disturbed, but desired that the priest might not leave the cottage.

When St. Aubert awoke from this doze, his senses were confused, and it was some moments before he recovered them sufficiently to know that it was Emily who sat beside him. He then moved his lips, and stretched forth his hand to her; as she

received which, she sunk back in her chair, overcome by the impression of death on his countenance. In a few minutes he recovered his voice, and Emily then asked if he wished to see the confessor: he replied that he did: and when the holy father appeared she withdrew. They remained alone together above half an hour. When Emily was called in, she found St. Aubert more agitated than when she had left him, and she gazed with a slight degree of resentment at the friar, as the cause of this; who, however, looked mildly and mournfully at her, and turned away. St. Aubert in a tremulous voice said he wished her to join in prayer with him, and asked if La Voisin would do so too. The old man and his daughter came: they both wept, and kneeled with Emily round the bed, while the holy father read in a solemn voice the service for the dying. St. Aubert lay with a serene countenance, and seemed to join fervently in the devotion; while tears often stole from beneath his closed eyelids, and Emily's sobs more than once interrupted the service.

When it was concluded, and extreme unction had been administered, the friar withdrew. St. Aubert then made a sign for La Voisin to come nearer. He gave him his hand, and was for a moment silent. At length he said in a trembling voice, "My good friend, our acquaintance has been short, but long enough to give you an opportunity of showing me much kind attention. I cannot doubt that you will extend this kindness to my daughter when I am gone; she will have need of it. I entrust her to your care during the few days she will remain here. I need say no more—you know the feelings of a father, for you have children: mine would be indeed severe, if I had less confidence in you." He paused.

La Voisin assured him, and his tears bore testimony to his sincerity, that he would do all he could to soften her affliction, and that, if St. Aubert wished it, he would even attend her into Gascony—an offer so pleasing to St. Aubert, that he had scarcely words to acknowledge his sense of the old man's kindness, or to tell him that he accepted it.—The scene that followed between St. Aubert and Emily affected La Voisin so much that he quitted the chamber, and she was again left alone with her father, whose spirits seemed fainting fast: but neither his senses nor his voice yet failed him; and at intervals he employed much of these last awful moments in advising his daughter as to her future conduct. Perhaps he never had thought more justly, or expressed himself more clearly, than he did now.

"Above all, my dear Emily," said he, "do not indulge in the

pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those who really possess sensibility ought early to be taught that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery or delight from every surrounding circumstance. And since, in our passage through this world, painful circumstances occur more frequently than pleasing ones, and since our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them. I know you will say—for you are young, my Emily—I know you will say that you are contented sometimes to suffer, rather than to give up your refined sense of happiness at others; but when your mind has been long harassed by vicissitude, you will be content to rest, and you will then recover from your delusion: you will perceive that the phantom of happiness is exchanged for the substance; for happiness arises in a state of peace, not of tumult: it is of a temperate and uniform nature, and can no more exist in a heart that is continually alive to minute circumstances, than in one that is dead to feeling. You see, my dear, that though I would guard you against the dangers of sensibility, I am not an advocate for apathy. At your age, I should have said *that* is a vice more hateful than all the errors of sensibility, and I say so still. I call it a *vice*, because it leads to positive evil. In this, however, it does no more than an ill-governed sensibility, which, by such a rule, might also be called a vice; but the evil of the former is of more general consequence.—I have exhausted myself,” said St. Aubert feebly, “and have wearied you, my Emily, but on a subject so important to your future comfort, I am anxious to be perfectly understood.”

Emily assured him that his advice was most precious to her, and that she would never forget it, or cease from endeavouring to profit by it. St. Aubert smiled affectionately and sorrowfully upon her.

“I repeat,” said he, “I would not teach you to become insensible if I could. I would only warn you of the evils of susceptibility, and point out how you may avoid them. Beware, my love, I conjure you, of that self-delusion which has been fatal to the peace of so many persons—beware of priding yourself on the gracefulness of sensibility. If you yield to this vanity, your happiness is lost for ever. Always remember how much more valuable is the strength of sensibility. Do not, however, confound fortitude with apathy—apathy cannot know the virtue. Remember, too, that one act of beneficence—one act of real usefulness—is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world.

Sentiment is a disgrace instead of an ornament, unless it lead us to good actions. The miser, who thinks himself respectable merely because he possesses wealth, and thus mistakes the means of doing good for the actual accomplishment of it, is not more blameable than the man of sentiment without active virtue. You may have observed persons who delight so much in this sort of sensibility to sentiment, which excludes that to the calls of any practical virtue, that they turn from the distressed, and, because their sufferings are painful to be contemplated, do not endeavour to relieve them. How despicable is that humanity which can be contented to pity where it might assuage!"

St. Aubert, some time after, spoke of Madame Cheron, his sister.

"Let me inform you of a circumstance that nearly affects your welfare," he added. "We have, you know, had little intercourse for some years, but as she is now your only female relation, I have thought it proper to consign you to her care, as you will see in my will, till you are of age, and to recommend you to her protection afterwards. She is not exactly the person to whom I would have committed my Emily; but I had no alternative, and I believe her to be, upon the whole, a good kind of woman. I need not recommend it to your prudence, my love, to endeavour to conciliate her kindness—you will do this for his sake who has often wished to do so for yours."

Emily assured him that whatever he requested she would religiously perform to the utmost of her ability. "Alas!" added she, in a voice interrupted by sighs, "that will soon be all which remains for me. It will be almost my only consolation to fulfil your wishes."

St. Aubert looked up silently in her face, as if he could have spoken; but his spirit sunk awhile, and his eyes became heavy and dull. She felt that look at her heart.

"My dear father!" she exclaimed; and then, checking herself, pressed his hand closer and hid her face with her handkerchief. Her tears were concealed, but St. Aubert heard her convulsive sobs. His spirits returned.

"O my child!" said he faintly, "let my consolation be yours. I die in peace; for I know that I am about to return to the bosom of my Father, who will still be our Father when I am gone. Always trust in Him, my love, and He will support you in these moments, as He supports me."

Emily could only listen and weep, but the extreme composure of his manner, and the faith and hope he expressed, somewhat

soothed her anguish. Yet whenever she looked upon his emaciated countenance, and saw the lines of death beginning to prevail over it—saw his sunk eyes still bent on her, and their heavy lids pressing to a close—there was a pang in her heart, such as defied expression, though it required filial virtue like hers to forbear the attempt.

He desired once more to bless her.

“Where are you, my dear?” said he, as he stretched forth his hands.

Emily had turned to the window that he might not perceive her anguish; she now understood that his sight had failed him.

When he had given her his blessing—and it seemed to be the last effort of expiring life—he sunk back on his pillow. She kissed his forehead—the damps of death had settled there—and, forgetting her fortitude for a moment, her tears mingled with them. St. Aubert lifted up his eyes; the spirit of a father returned to them, but it quickly vanished, and he spoke no more.

St. Aubert lingered till about three o’clock in the afternoon, and thus gradually sinking into death, he expired without a struggle or a sigh.

Emily was led from the chamber by La Voisin and his daughter, who did what they could to comfort her. The old man sat and wept with her. Agnes was more erroneously officious.

CHAPTER VIII

O’er him, whose doom thy virtues grieve,
Aerial forms shall sit at eve,
And bend the pensive head.

COLLINS.

THE monk who had before appeared, returned in the evening to offer consolation to Emily, and brought a kind message from the lady abbess, inviting her to the convent. Emily, though she did not accept the offer, returned an answer expressive of her gratitude. The holy conversation of the friar, whose mild benevolence of manners bore some resemblance to those of St. Aubert, soothed the violence of her grief, and lifted her heart to the Being who, extending through all place and all eternity, looks on the events of this little world as on the shadows of a moment, and beholds equally, and in the same instant, the soul

that has passed the gates of death and that which stills lingers in the body.

"In the sight of God," said Emily, "my dear father now exists as truly as he yesterday existed to me. It is to me only that he is dead—to God and to himself he yet lives!"

The good monk left her more tranquil than she had been since St. Aubert died; and before she retired to her little cabin for the night, she trusted herself so far as to visit the corpse. Silent, and without weeping, she stood by its side. The features, placid and serene, told the nature of the last sensations that had lingered in the now deserted frame. For a moment she turned away, in horror of the stillness in which death had fixed that countenance, never till now seen otherwise than animated; then gazed on it with a mixture of doubt and awful astonishment. Her reason could scarcely overcome an involuntary and unaccountable expectation of seeing that beloved countenance still susceptible. She continued to gaze wildly; took up the cold hand; spoke—still gazed; and then burst into a transport of grief. La Voisin, hearing her sobs, came into the room to lead her away; but she heard nothing, and only begged that he would leave her.

Again alone, she indulged her tears; and when the gloom of evening obscured the chamber, and almost veiled from her eyes the object of her distress, she still hung over the body; till her spirits at length were exhausted, and she became tranquil. La Voisin again knocked at the door, and entreated that she would come to the common apartment. Before she went she kissed the lips of St. Aubert, as she was wont to do when she bade him good-night. Again she kissed them. Her heart felt as if it would break: a few tears of agony started to her eyes—she looked up to heaven—then at St. Aubert—and left the room.

Retired to her lonely cabin, her melancholy thoughts still hovered round the body of her deceased parent; and when she sunk into a kind of slumber, the images of her waking mind still haunted her fancy. She thought she saw her father approaching her with a benign countenance: then, smiling mournfully and pointing upwards, his lips moved; but instead of words, she heard sweet music borne on the distant air, and presently saw his features glow with the mild rapture of a superior being. The strain seemed to swell louder, and she awoke. The vision was gone; but music yet came to her ear in strains such as angels might breathe. She doubted, listened, raised herself in the bed, and again listened. It was music and not an illusion of her

imagination. After a solemn steady harmony, it paused—then rose again in mournful sweetness,—and then died, in a cadence that seemed to bear away the listening soul to heaven. She instantly remembered the music of the preceding night with the strange circumstances related by La Voisin, and the affecting conversation it had led to concerning the state of departed spirits.

All that St. Aubert had said on that subject now pressed upon her heart, and overwhelmed it. What a change in a few hours! He, who then could not conjecture, was now made acquainted with truth—was himself become one of the departed! As she listened, she was chilled with superstitious awe; her tears stopped; and she rose, and went to the window. All without was obscured in shade: but Emily, turning her eyes from the massy darkness of the woods, whose waving outline appeared on the horizon, saw, on the left, that effulgent planet which the old man had pointed out, setting over the woods. She remembered what he had said concerning it; and the music now coming at intervals on the air, she unclosed the casement to listen to the strains, that soon gradually sunk to a greater distance, and tried to discover whence they came. The obscurity prevented her from distinguishing any object on the green platform below; and the sounds became fainter and fainter, till they softened into silence. She listened, but they returned no more. Soon after she observed the planet trembling between the fringed tops of the woods, and in the next moment sink behind them. Chilled with a melancholy awe, she retired once more to her bed, and at length forgot for a while her sorrows in sleep.

On the following morning she was visited by a sister of the convent, who came with kind offices and a second invitation from the lady abbess; and Emily, though she could not forsake the cottage while the remains of her father were in it, consented, however painful such a visit must be in the present state of her spirits, to pay her respects to the abbess in the evening.

About an hour before sunset La Voisin showed her the way through the woods to the convent, which stood in a small bay of the Mediterranean, crowned by a woody amphitheatre; and Emily, had she been less unhappy, would have admired the extensive sea-view that appeared from the green slope in front of the edifice, and the rich shores, hung with woods and pastures, that extended on either hand. But her thoughts were now occupied by one sad idea; and the features of nature were to her colourless and without form. The bell for vespers struck as she passed the ancient gate of the convent, and seemed the

funeral note for St. Aubert:—little incidents affect a mind enervated by sorrow. Emily struggled against the sickening faintness that came over her, and was led into the presence of the abbess, who received her with an air of maternal tenderness—an air of such gentle solicitude and consideration as touched her with an instantaneous gratitude; her eyes were filled with tears; and the words she would have spoken faltered on her lips. The abbess led her to a seat, and sat down beside her; still holding her hand, and regarding her in silence, as Emily dried her tears and attempted to speak.

“Be composed, my daughter,” said the abbess in a soothing voice; “do not speak yet; I know all you would say. Your spirits must be soothed. We are going to prayers: will you attend our evening service? It is comfortable, my child, to look up in our afflictions to a Father who sees and pities us, and who chastens in His mercy.”

Emily’s tears flowed again; but a thousand sweet emotions mingled with them. The abbess suffered her to weep without interruption, and watched over her with a look of benignity that might have characterized the countenance of a guardian angel. Emily, when she became tranquil, was encouraged to speak without reserve, and to mention the motive that made her unwilling to quit the cottage; which the abbess did not oppose even by a hint; but praised the filial piety of her conduct, and added a hope that she would pass a few days at the convent before she returned to La Vallée.

“You must allow yourself a little time to recover from your first shock, my daughter, before you encounter a second; I will not affect to conceal from you how much I know your heart must suffer on returning to the scene of your former happiness. Here you will have all that quiet, and sympathy, and religion can give to restore your spirits. But come,” added she, observing the tears swell in Emily’s eyes, “we will go to the chapel.”

Emily followed to the parlour, where the nuns were assembled; to whom the abbess committed her, saying, “This is a daughter for whom I have much esteem; be a sister to her.” They passed on in a train to the chapel, where the solemn devotion with which the service was performed elevated her mind, and brought to it the comforts of faith and resignation.

Twilight came on before the abbess’s kindness would suffer Emily to depart; when she left the convent, with a heart much lighter than she had entered it, and was reconducted by La Voisin through the woods, the pensive gloom of which was in

unison with the temper of her mind; and she pursued the little wild path in musing silence, till her guide suddenly stopped, looked round, and then struck out of the path into the high grass, saying he had mistaken the road.

He now walked on quickly; and Emily, proceeding with difficulty over the obscured and uneven ground, was left at some distance, till her voice arrested him; who seemed unwilling to stop, and still hurried on.

"If you are in doubt about the way," said Emily, "had we not better inquire it at the château yonder, between the trees?"

"No," replied La Voisin; "there is no occasion. When we reach that brook, *ma'amselle*,—(you see the light upon the water there, beyond the woods)—when we reach that brook, we shall be at home presently: I don't know how I happened to mistake the path: I seldom come this way after sunset."

"It is solitary enough," said Emily, "but you have no *banditti* here?"

"No, *ma'amselle*—no *banditti*."

"What are you afraid of then, my good friend?—you are not superstitious?"

"No, not superstitious,—but, to tell you the truth, lady, nobody likes to go near the château after dusk."

"By whom is it inhabited," said Emily, "that it is so formidable?"

"Why, *ma'amselle*, it is scarcely inhabited; for our lord the Marquis, and the lord of all these fine woods too, is dead. He had not once been in it for these many years; and his people who have the care of it live in a cottage close by."

Emily now understood this to be the château which La Voisin had formerly pointed out as having belonged to the Marquis Villeroi, on the mention of which her father had been so much affected.

"Ah! it is a desolate place now," continued La Voisin; "and such a grand fine place as I remember it!"

Emily inquired what had occasioned this lamentable change; but the old man was silent: and Emily, whose interest was awakened by the fear he had expressed, and above all by a recollection of her father's agitation, repeated the question, and added, "If you are neither afraid of the inhabitants, my good friend, nor are superstitious, how happens it that you dread to pass that château in the dark?"

"Perhaps, then, I am a little superstitious, *ma'amselle*; and if you / I do, you might be so too. Strange things

have happened there. Monsieur, your good father, appeared to have known the late Marchioness."

"Pray inform me what did happen," said Emily with much emotion.

"Alas! *ma'amselle*," answered La Voisin, "inquire no further: it is not for me to lay open the domestic secrets of my lord."

Emily, surprised by the old man's words and his manner of delivering them, forbore to repeat her question: a nearer interest, the remembrance of St. Aubert, occupied her thoughts; and she was led to recollect the music she heard on the preceding night, which she mentioned to La Voisin.

"You was not alone, *ma'amselle*, in this," he replied; "I heard it too; but I have so often heard it, at the same hour, that I was scarcely surprised."

"You doubtless believe this music to have some connection with the *château*," said Emily suddenly; "and are therefore superstitious?"

"It may be so, *ma'amselle*; but there are other circumstances belonging to that *château* which I remember, and sadly too!"

A heavy sigh followed: but Emily's delicacy restrained the curiosity these words revived, and she inquired no further.

On reaching the cottage, all the violence of her grief returned: it seemed as if she had escaped its heavy pressure only while she was removed from the object of it. She passed immediately to the chamber where the remains of her father were laid, and yielded to all the anguish of hopeless grief.

La Voisin at length persuaded her to leave the room, and she returned to her own; where, exhausted by the sufferings of the day, she soon fell into deep sleep, and awoke considerably refreshed.

When the dreadful hour arrived in which the remains of St. Aubert were to be taken from her for ever, she went alone to the chamber to look upon his countenance yet once again; and La Voisin, who had waited patiently below stairs till her despair should subside, with the respect due to grief, forbore to interrupt the indulgence of it, till surprise at the length of her stay, and then apprehension, overcame his delicacy, and he went to lead her from the chamber.

Having tapped gently at the door without receiving an answer, he listened attentively; but all was still—no sigh, no sob of anguish was heard. Yet more alarmed by this silence, he opened the door, and found Emily lying senseless across the foot of the bed, near which stood the coffin.

His calls procured assistance, and she was carried to her room, where proper applications at length restored her.

During her state of insensibility, La Voisin had given directions for the coffin to be closed, and he succeeded in persuading Emily to forbear revisiting the chamber.

She, indeed, felt herself unequal to this, and also perceived the necessity of sparing her spirits, and collecting fortitude sufficient to bear her through the approaching scene.

St. Aubert had given a particular injunction that his remains should be interred in the church of the convent of St. Clair, and, in mentioning the north chancel, near the ancient tomb of the Villerois, had pointed out the exact spot where he wished to be laid.

The superior had granted this place for the interment; and thither, therefore, the sad procession now moved; which was met at the gates by the venerable priest, followed by a train of friars.

Every person who heard the solemn chant of the anthem, and the peal of the organ, that struck up when the body entered the church, and saw also the feeble steps and the assumed tranquillity of Emily, gave her involuntary tears. She shed none; but walked, her face partly shaded by a thin black veil, between two persons who supported her, preceded by the abbess, and followed by nuns, whose plaintive voices mellowed the swelling harmony of the dirge.

When the procession came to the grave, the music ceased.

Emily drew the veil entirely over her face, and in a momentary pause between the anthem and the rest of the service, her sobs were distinctly audible.

The holy father began the service: and Emily again commanded her feelings, till the coffin was let down, and she heard the earth rattle on its lid: then, as she shuddered, a groan burst from her heart, and she leaned for support on the person who stood next to her. In a few moments she recovered; and when she heard those affecting and sublime words—"His body is buried in peace, and his soul returns to Him that gave it"—her anguish softened into tears.

The abbess led her from the church into her own parlour, and there administered all the consolations that religion and gentle sympathy can give. Emily struggled against the pressure of grief; but the abbess, observing her attentively, ordered a bed to be prepared, and recommended her to retire to repose. She also kindly claimed her promise to remain a few days at the

convent; and Emily, who had no wish to return to the cottage, the scene of all her sufferings, had leisure, now that no immediate care pressed upon her attention, to feel the indisposition which disabled her from immediately travelling.

Meanwhile the maternal kindness of the abbess and the gentle attentions of the nuns did all that was possible towards soothing her spirits and restoring her health. But the latter was too deeply wounded, through the medium of her mind, to be quickly revived. She lingered for some weeks at the convent under the influence of a slow fever, wishing to return home, yet unable to return thither—often even reluctant to leave the spot where her father's relics were deposited, and sometimes soothing herself with the consideration that, if she died here, her remains would repose beside those of St. Aubert.

In the meantime she sent letters to Madame Cheron and to the old housekeeper, informing them of the sad event that had taken place, and her own situation. From her aunt she received an answer, abounding more in commonplace condolence than in traits of real sorrow, which assured her that a servant should be sent to conduct her to La Vallée, for that her own time was so much occupied by company, that she had no leisure to undertake so long a journey.

However Emily might prefer La Vallée to Toulouse, she could not be insensible to the indecorous and unkind conduct of her aunt in suffering her to return thither, where she had no longer a relation to console and protect her—a conduct which was the more culpable since St. Aubert had appointed Madame Cheron the guardian of his orphan daughter.

Madame Cheron's servant made the attendance of the good La Voisin unnecessary; and Emily, who felt sensibly her obligations to him for all his kind attention to her late father, as well as to herself, was glad to spare him a long, and what, at his time of life, must have been a troublesome journey.

During her stay at the convent the peace and sanctity that reigned within, the tranquil beauty of the scenery without, and the delicate attentions of the abbess and the nuns, were circumstances so soothing to her mind that they almost tempted her to leave a world where she had lost her dearest friends, and devote herself to the cloister in a spot rendered sacred to her by containing the tomb of St. Aubert. The pensive enthusiasm, too, so natural to her temper, had spread a beautiful illusion over the sanctified retirement of a nun, that almost hid from her view the selfishness of its security. But the touches which

a melancholy fancy, slightly tinctured with superstition, gave to the monastic scene, began to fade as her spirits revived, and brought once more to her heart an image which had only transiently been banished thence. By this she was silently awakened to hope, and comfort, and sweet affections; visions of happiness gleamed faintly at a distance, and though she knew them to be illusions, she could not resolve to shut them out for ever. It was the remembrance of Valancourt—of his taste, his genius, and of the countenance which glowed with both—that perhaps alone determined her to return to the world. The grandeur and sublimity of the scenes amidst which they had first met had fascinated her fancy, and had imperceptibly contributed to render Valancourt more interesting by seeming to communicate to him somewhat of their own character. The esteem, too, which St. Aubert had repeatedly expressed for him sanctioned this kindness. But though his countenance and manner had continually expressed his admiration of her, he had not otherwise declared it; and even the hope of seeing him again was so distant that she was scarcely conscious of it—still less that it influenced her conduct on this occasion.

It was several days after the arrival of Madame Cheron's servant before Emily was sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey to La Vallée. On the evening preceding her departure she went to the cottage to take leave of La Voisin and his family, and to make them a return for their kindness. The old man she found sitting on a bench at his door, between his daughter and his son-in-law, who was just returned from his daily labour, and who was playing upon a pipe that in tone resembled an oboe. A flask of wine stood beside the old man, and before him a small table with fruit and bread, round which stood several of his grandsons, fine rosy children, who were taking their supper as their mother distributed it. On the edge of the little green that spread before the cottage were cattle and a few sheep reposing under the trees. The landscape was touched with the mellow light of the evening sun, whose long slanting beams played through a vista of the woods, and lighted up the distant turrets of the château. She paused a moment, before she emerged from the shade, to gaze upon the happy group before her—on the complacency and ease of healthy age depicted on the countenance of La Voisin; the maternal tenderness of Agnes as she looked upon her children; and the innocence of infantine pleasure reflected in their smiles. Emily looked again at the venerable old man and at the cottage. The memory of

her father rose with full force upon her mind, and she hastily stepped forward, afraid to trust herself with a longer pause. She took an affectionate and affecting leave of La Voisin and his family; he seemed to love her as his daughter, and shed tears. Emily shed many. She avoided going into the cottage, since she knew it would revive emotions such as she could not now endure.

One painful scene yet awaited her—for she determined to visit again her father's grave; and that she might not be interrupted or observed in the indulgence of her melancholy tenderness, she deferred her visit till every inhabitant of the convent, except the nun who promised to bring her the key of the church, should be retired to rest.

Emily remained in her chamber till she heard the convent bell strike twelve, when the nun came, as she had appointed, with the key of a private door that opened into the church; and they descended together the narrow winding staircase that led thither.

The nun offered to accompany Emily to the grave, adding: "It is melancholy to go alone at this hour"; but the former, thanking her for the consideration, could not consent to have any witness of her sorrow; and the sister, having unlocked the door, gave her the lamp.

"You will remember, sister," said she, "that in the east aisle, which you must pass, is a newly-opened grave; hold the light to the ground, that you may not stumble over the loose earth."

Emily, thanking her again, took the lamp, and, stepping into the church, Sister Mariette departed.

But Emily paused a moment at the door: a sudden fear came over her, and she returned to the foot of the staircase, where, as she heard the steps of the nun ascending, and, while she held up the lamp, saw her black veil waving over the spiral balusters, she was tempted to call her back. While she hesitated, the veil disappeared; and in the next moment, ashamed of her fears, she returned to the church. The cold air of the aisles chilled her; and their deep silence and extent, feebly shone upon by the moonlight that streamed through a Gothic window, would at any other time have awed her into superstition; now grief occupied all her attention. She scarcely heard the whispering echoes of her own steps, or thought of the open grave till she found herself almost on its brink. A friar of the convent had been buried there on the preceding evening, and, as she had sat alone in her chamber at twilight, she heard at a distance the monks chanting the requiem for his soul. This brought freshly to her memory the circumstances of her father's death; and

as the voices, mingling with a low querulous peal of the organ, swelled faintly, gloomy and affecting visions had arisen upon her mind. Now she remembered them; and turning aside to avoid the broken ground, these recollections made her pass on with quicker steps to the grave of St. Aubert; when, in the moonlight that fell athwart a remote part of the aisle, she thought she saw a shadow gliding between the pillars. She stopped to listen; and not hearing any footsteps, believed that her fancy had deceived her, and, no longer apprehensive of being observed, proceeded. St. Aubert was buried beneath a plain marble, bearing little more than his name and the date of his birth and death, near the foot of the stately monument of the Villerois. Emily remained at his grave till a chime that called the monks to early prayers warned her to retire; then she wept over it a last farewell, and forced herself from the spot. After this hour of melancholy indulgence, she was refreshed by a deeper sleep than she had experienced for a long time; and on awakening, her mind was more tranquil and resigned than it had been since St. Aubert's death.

But when the moment of her departure from the convent arrived, all her grief returned: the memory of the dead, and the kindness of the living, attached her to the place; and for the sacred spot where her father's remains were interred, she seemed to feel all those tender affections which we conceive for home. The abbess repeated many kind assurances of regard at their parting, and pressed her to return, if ever she should find her condition elsewhere unpleasant; many of the nuns also expressed unaffected regret at her departure; and Emily left the convent with many tears, and followed by sincere wishes for her happiness.

She had travelled several leagues, before the scenes of the country through which she passed had power to rouse her for a moment from the deep melancholy into which she was sunk; and when they did, it was only to remind her that on the last view of them St. Aubert was at her side, and to call up to her remembrance the remarks he had delivered on similar scenery. Thus, without any particular occurrence, passed the day in languor and dejection. She slept that night in a town on the skirts of Languedoc, and on the following morning entered Gascony.

Toward the close of this day Emily came within view of the plains in the neighbourhood of La Vallée, and the well-known objects of former times began to press upon her notice, and, with them, recollections that awakened all her tenderness and grief.

Often, while she looked through her tears upon the wild grandeur of the Pyrenees, now varied with the rich lights and shadows of evening, she remembered that, when last she saw them, her father partook with her of the pleasure they inspired. Suddenly some scene which he had particularly pointed out to her would present itself, and the sick languor of despair would steal upon her heart. "There!" she would exclaim, "there are the very cliffs, there the wood of pines, which he looked at with such delight as we passed this road together for the last time! There, too, under the crag of that mountain, is the cottage, peeping from among the cedars, which he bade me remember, and copy with my pencil! O my father, shall I never see you more!"

As she drew near the château, these melancholy memorials of past times multiplied. At length the château itself appeared, amid the glowing beauty of St. Aubert's favourite landscape. This was an object which called for fortitude, not for tears: Emily dried hers, and prepared to meet with calmness the trying moment of her return to that home where there was no longer a parent to welcome her. "Yes," said she; "let me not forget the lessons he has taught me! How often he has pointed out the necessity of resisting even virtuous sorrow! how often we have admired together the greatness of a mind that can at once suffer and reason! O my father! if you are permitted to look down upon your child, it will please you to see that she remembers, and endeavours to practise, the precepts you have given her."

A turn on the road now allowed a nearer view of the château; the chimneys, tipped with light, rising from behind St. Aubert's favourite oaks, whose foliage partly concealed the lower part of the building. Emily could not suppress a heavy sigh. "This, too, was his favourite hour!" said she, as she gazed upon the long evening shadows stretched athwart the landscape. "How deep the repose! how lovely the scene!—lovely and tranquil as in former days!"

Again she resisted the pressure of sorrow till her ear caught the gay melody of the dance, which she had so often listened to as she walked with St. Aubert on the margin of the Garonne; when all her fortitude forsook her; and she continued to weep till the carriage stopped at the little gate that opened upon what was now her own territory. She raised her eyes on the sudden stoppage of the carriage, and saw her father's old housekeeper coming to open the gate. Manchon also came running and barking before her, and when his young mistress alighted, fawned and played round her, gasping with joy.

"Dear ma'amselle!" said Theresa, and paused, and looked as if she would have offered something of condolence to Emily, whose tears now prevented reply. The dog still fawned and ran round her, and then flew towards the carriage with a short quick bark.

"Ah, ma'amselle! my poor master!" said Theresa, whose feelings were more awakened than her delicacy; "Manchon's gone to look for him."

Emily sobbed aloud; and on looking towards the carriage, which still stood with the door open, saw the animal spring into it, and instantly leap out, and then, with his nose on the ground, run round the horses.

"Don't cry so, ma'amselle," said Theresa; "it breaks my heart to see you." The dog now came running to Emily, then returned to the carriage, and then back again to her, whining and discontented. "Poor rogue!" said Theresa, "thou hast lost thy master—thou mayst well cry! But come, my dear young lady, be comforted. What shall I get to refresh you?"

Emily gave her hand to the old servant, and tried to restrain her grief, while she made some kind inquiries concerning her health. But she still lingered in the walk which led to the château—for within was no person to meet her with the kiss of affection: her own heart no longer palpitated with impatient joy to meet again the well-known smile; and she dreaded to see objects which would recall the full remembrance of her former happiness. She moved slowly towards the door, paused, went on, and paused again. How silent, how forsaken, how forlorn, did the château appear! Trembling to enter it, yet blaming herself for delaying what she could not avoid, she at length passed into the hall, crossed it with a hurried step as if afraid to look round, and opened the door of that room which she was wont to call her own. The gloom of evening gave solemnity to its silent and deserted air. The chairs, the tables, every article of furniture, so familiar to her in happier times, spoke eloquently to her heart. She seated herself, without immediately observing it, in a window which opened upon the garden, and where St. Aubert had often sat with her watching the sun retire from the rich and extensive prospect that appeared beyond the groves.

Having indulged her tears for some time, she became more composed; and when Theresa, after seeing the baggage deposited in her lady's room, again appeared, she had so far recovered her spirits as to be able to converse with her.

"I have made up the green bed for you, ma'amselle," said

Theresa, as she set the coffee upon the table: "I thought you would like it better than your own now, but I little thought, this day month, that you would come back alone. A-well-a-day! the news almost broke my heart when it did come. Who would have believed that my poor master, when he went from home, would never return again!"

Emily hid her face with her handkerchief, and waved her hand.

"Do taste the coffee," said Theresa. "My dear young lady, be comforted—we must all die. My dear master is a saint above."

Emily took the handkerchief from her face, and raised her eyes, full of tears, towards heaven. Soon after she dried them, and in a calm but tremulous voice began to inquire concerning some of her late father's pensioners.

"Alas-a-day!" said Theresa, as she poured out the coffee and handed it to her mistress, "all that could come have been here every day to inquire after you and my master." She then proceeded to tell, that some were dead whom they had left well; and others, who were ill, had recovered. "And see, ma'amselle," added Theresa; "there is old Mary coming up the garden now; she has looked every day these three years as if she would die, yet she is alive still. She has seen the chaise at the door, and knows you are come home."

The sight of this poor old woman would have been too much for Emily, and she begged Theresa would go and tell her that she was too ill to see any person that night. "To-morrow I shall be better, perhaps; but give her this token of my remembrance."

Emily sat for some time given up to sorrow. Not an object on which her eye glanced but awakened some remembrance that led immediately to the subject of her grief. Her favourite plants, which St. Aubert had taught her to nurse; the little drawings that adorned the room, which his taste had instructed her to execute; the books that he had selected for her use, and which they had read together; her musical instruments, whose sounds he loved so well, and which he sometimes awakened himself—every object gave new force to sorrow. At length she roused herself from this melancholy indulgence; and summoning all her resolution, stepped forward to go into those forlorn rooms, which, though she dreaded to enter, she knew would yet more powerfully affect her if she delayed to visit them.

Having passed through the greenhouse, her courage for a moment forsook her when she opened the door of the library; and perhaps, the shade which evening and the foliage of the trees

near the windows threw across the room, heightened the solemnity of her feelings on entering that apartment where everything spoke of her father. There was an arm-chair in which he used to sit: she shrunk when she observed it; for she had so often seen him seated there, and the idea of him rose so distinctly to her mind, that she almost fancied she saw him before her. But she checked the illusions of a distempered imagination, though she could not subdue a certain degree of awe which now mingled with her emotions. She walked slowly to the chair, and seated herself in it. There was a reading-desk before it, on which lay a book, open, as it had been left by her father. It was some moments before she recovered courage enough to examine it; and when she looked at the open page, she immediately recollected that St. Aubert, on the evening before his departure from the château, had read to her some passages from this his favourite author. The circumstances now affected her extremely: she looked at the page, wept and looked again. To her the book appeared sacred and invaluable; and she would not have moved it, or closed the page which he had left open, for the treasures of the Indies. Still she sat before the desk; and could not resolve to quit it, though the increasing gloom, and the profound silence of the apartment, revived a degree of painful awe. Her thoughts dwelt on the probable state of departed spirits; and she remembered the affecting conversation which passed between St. Aubert and La Voisin on the night preceding his death.

As she mused, she saw the door slowly open; and a rustling sound in a remote part of the room startled her. Through the dusk she thought she perceived something move. The subject she had been considering, and the present state of her spirits, which made her imagination respond to every impression of her senses, gave her a sudden terror of something supernatural. She sat for a moment motionless; and then her dissipated reason returning, "What should I fear?" said she; "if the spirits of those we love ever return again to us, it is in kindness."

The silence which again reigned made her ashamed of her late fears, and she believed that her imagination had deluded her, or that she had heard one of those unaccountable noises which sometimes occur in old houses. The same sound, however, returned; and, distinguishing something moving towards her, and in the next instant press beside her into the chair, she shrieked; but her fleeting senses were instantly recalled, on perceiving that it was Manchon who sat by her, and who now licked her hand affectionately.

Perceiving her spirits unequal to the task she had assigned herself, of visiting the deserted rooms of the château this night, when she left the library she walked into the garden, and down to the terrace that overhung the river. The sun was now set; but under the dark branches of the almond-trees was seen the saffron glow of the west, spreading beyond the twilight of middle air. The bat flitted silently by; and now and then the mourning note of the nightingale was heard.

The circumstances of the hour brought to her recollection some lines which she had once heard St. Aubert recite on this very spot, and she had now a melancholy pleasure in repeating them.

SONNET

Now the bat circles on the breeze of eve,
That creeps, in shuddering fits, along the wave,
And trembles 'mid the woods and through the cave,
Whose lonely sighs the wanderer deceive:

For oft when Melancholy charms his mind,
He thinks the Spirit of the rock he hears,
Nor listens, but with sweetly-thrilling fears,
To the low mystic murmurs of the wind.

Now the bat circles; and the twilight-dew
Falls silent round, and o'er the mountain-cliff,
The gleaming wave, and far discover'd skiff,
Spreads the grey veil of soft, harmonious hue.

So falls o'er Grief the dew of Pity's tear,
Dimming her lonely visions of despair.

Emily, wandering on, came to St. Aubert's favourite plane-tree, where so often, at this hour, they had sat beneath the shade together, and with her dear mother so often had conversed on the subject of a future state. How often, too, had her father expressed the comfort he derived from believing that they should meet in another world! Emily, overcome by these recollections, left the plane-tree; and as she leaned pensively on the wall of the terrace, she observed a group of peasants dancing gaily on the banks of the Garonne, which spread in broad expanse below, and reflected the evening light. What a contrast they formed to the desolate, unhappy Emily! They were gay and *débonnaire*, as they were wont to be when she, too, was gay—when St. Aubert used to listen to their merry music, with a countenance beaming pleasure and benevolence. Emily, having

looked for a moment on this sprightly band, turned away, unable to bear the remembrances it excited; but where, alas! could she turn, and not meet new objects to give acuteness to grief!

As she walked slowly towards the house, she was met by Theresa.

"Dear ma'amselle," said she, "I have been seeking you up and down this half-hour, and was afraid some accident had happened to you. How can you like to wander about so in this night air? Do come into the house. Think what my poor master would have said, if he could see you. I am sure, when my dear lady died, no gentleman could take it more to heart than he did; yet you know he seldom shed a tear."

"Pray, Theresa, cease," said Emily, wishing to interrupt this ill-judged but well-meaning harangue.

Theresa's loquacity, however, was not to be silenced so easily.

"And when you used to grieve so," she added, "he often told you how wrong it was—for that my mistress was happy. And if she was happy, I am sure he is so too; for the prayers of the poor, they say, reach heaven."

During this speech, Emily had walked silently into the château, and Theresa lighted her across the hall into the common sitting-parlour, where she had laid the cloth with one solitary knife and fork for supper. Emily was in the room before she perceived that it was not her own apartment; but she checked the emotion which inclined her to leave it, and seated herself quietly by the little supper-table. Her father's hat hung upon the opposite wall: while she gazed at it a faintness came over her. Theresa looked at her, and then at the object on which her eyes were settled, and went to remove it; but Emily waved her hand.

"No," said she, "let it remain; I am going to my chamber."

"Nay, ma'amselle, supper is ready."

"I cannot take it," replied Emily; "I will go to my room, and try to sleep. To-morrow I shall be better."

"This is poor doings!" said Theresa. "Dear lady! do take some food! I have dressed a pheasant, and a ^{my} ^{gained} ^{it is}. Old Monsieur Barreaux sent it this morning; and ^{ad delu} ^{y him} yesterday, and told him you were coming; and I ^k ^{noises} ^{body} that seemed more concerned, when he heard the sad, ho ^{phan} ^{he}." ^{toward}

"Did he?" said Emily, in a tender voice, while she ^{felt} ^{her} poor heart warmed for a moment by a ray of sympathy.

At length her spirits were entirely overcome, and she retired to her room.

CHAPTER IX

Can Music's voice, can Beauty's eye,
 Can Painting's glowing hand, supply
 A charm so suited to my mind,
 As blows this hollow gust of wind;
 As drops this little weeping rill
 Soft tinkling down the moss-grown hill;
 While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
 Meek Twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners grey?

MASON.

EMILY, some time after her return to La Vallée, received letters from her aunt, Madame Cheron, in which, after some commonplace condolence and advice, she invited her to Toulouse, and added, that, as her late brother had entrusted Emily's education to her, she should consider herself bound to overlook her conduct. Emily, at this time, wished only to remain at La Vallée, in the scenes of her early happiness, now rendered infinitely dear to her, as the residence of those whom she had lost for ever; where she could weep unobserved, retrace their steps, and remember each minute particular of their manners. But she was equally anxious to avoid the displeasure of Madame Cheron.

Though her affection would not suffer her to question, even for a moment, the propriety of St. Aubert's conduct in appointing Madame Cheron for her guardian, she was sensible that this step had made her happiness depend, in a great degree, on the humour of her aunt. In her reply she begged permission to remain at present at La Vallée; mentioning the extreme dejection of her spirits, and the necessity she felt for quiet and retirement to restore them. These she knew were not to be found at Madame Cheron's, whose inclinations led her into a life of dissipation, which her ample fortune encouraged. And, having given her answer, she felt somewhat more at ease.

In the first days of her affliction she was visited by Monsieur Barreaux, a sincere mourner for St. Aubert.

"I may well lament my friend," said he, "for I shall never meet with his resemblance! If I could have found such a man in what is called society, I should not have left it."

M. Barreaux's admiration of her father endeared him extremely to Emily; whose heart found almost its first relief in conversing of her parents with a man whom she so much revered, and who,

though with such an ungracious appearance, possessed so much goodness of heart and delicacy of mind.

Several weeks passed away in quiet retirement, and Emily's affliction began to soften into melancholy. She could bear to read the books she had before read with her father—to sit in his chair in the library—to watch the flowers his hand had planted—to awaken the tones of that instrument his fingers had pressed, and sometimes even to play his favourite air.

When her mind had recovered from the first shock of affliction, perceiving the danger of yielding to indolence, and that activity alone could restore its tone, she scrupulously endeavoured to pass all her hours in employment. And it was now that she understood the full value of the education she had received from St. Aubert—for, in cultivating her understanding, he had secured her an asylum from indolence without recourse to dissipation, and rich and varied amusement and information independent of the society from which her situation secluded her. Nor were the good effects of this education confined to selfish advantages; since St. Aubert having nourished every amiable quality of her heart, it now expanded in benevolence to all around her, and taught her, when she could not remove the misfortunes of others, at least to soften them by sympathy and tenderness—a benevolence that taught her to feel for all that could suffer.

Madame Cheron returned no answer to Emily's letter; who began to hope that she should be permitted to remain some time longer in her retirement; and her mind had now so far recovered its strength that she ventured to view the scenes which most powerfully recalled the images of past times. Among these was the fishing-house; and to indulge still more the affectionate melancholy of the visit, she took thither her lute, that she might again hear there the tones to which St. Aubert and her mother had so often delighted to listen. She went alone, and at that still hour of the evening which is so soothing to fancy and to grief.

The last time she had been here she was in company with Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert, a few days preceding that on which the latter was seized with a fatal illness; now, when Emily again entered the woods that surrounded the building, they awakened so forcibly the memory of former times, that her resolution yielded for a moment to excess of grief: she stopped, leaned for support against a tree, and wept for some minutes before she had recovered herself sufficiently to proceed. The little path that led to the building was overgrown with grass,

and the flowers which St. Aubert had scattered carelessly along the border were almost choked with weeds—the tall thistle, the foxglove, and the nettle. She often paused to look on the desolate spot, now so silent and forsaken!—and when with a trembling hand she opened the door of the fishing-house:

“Ah!” said she “everything, everything remains as when I left it last—left it with those who never must return!”

She went to the window that overhung the rivulet, and leaning over it, with her eyes fixed on the current, was soon lost in melancholy reverie. The lute she had brought lay forgotten beside her: the mournful sighing of the breeze as it waved the high pines above, and its softer whispers among the osiers that bowed upon the banks below, was a kind of music more in unison with her feelings; it did not vibrate on the chords of unhappy memory, but was soothing to the heart as the voice of pity. She continued to muse, unconscious of the gloom of evening, and that the sun’s last light trembled on the heights above; and would probably have remained so much longer if a sudden footstep, without the building, had not alarmed her attention, and first made her recollect that she was unprotected. In the next moment the door opened, and a stranger appeared, who stopped on perceiving Emily, and then began to apologize for his intrusion. But Emily, at the sound of his voice, lost her fear in a stronger emotion: its tones were familiar to her ear; and, though she could not readily distinguish through the dusk the features of the person who spoke, she felt a remembrance too strong to be distrusted.

He repeated his apology, and Emily then said something in reply; when the stranger, eagerly advancing, exclaimed:

“Good God! can it be?—surely I am not mistaken—Ma’am-selle St. Aubert?—is it not?”

“It is indeed,” said Emily, who was confirmed in her first conjecture; for she now distinguished the countenance of Valancourt lighted up with still more than its usual animation. A thousand painful recollections crowded to her mind; and the effort which she made to support herself only served to increase her agitation.

Valancourt meanwhile, having inquired anxiously after her health, and expressed his hopes that Monsieur St. Aubert had found benefit from travelling, learned, from the flood of tears which she could no longer repress, the fatal truth. He led her to a seat, and sat down by her; while Emily continued to weep, and Valancourt to hold the hand which she was unconscious he had taken

till it was wet with tears which grief for St. Aubert and sympathy for herself had called forth.

"I feel," said he at length, "I feel how insufficient all attempt at consolation must be on this subject; I can only mourn with you; for I cannot doubt the source of your tears. Would to God I were mistaken!"

Emily could still answer only by tears, till she rose and begged they might leave the melancholy spot; when Valancourt, though he saw her feebleness, could not offer to detain her, but took her arm within his, and led her from the fishing-house. They walked silently through the woods; Valancourt anxious to know yet fearing to ask any particulars concerning St. Aubert, and Emily too much distressed to converse. After some time, however, she acquired fortitude enough to speak of her father, and to give a brief account of the manner of his death; during which recital Valancourt's countenance betrayed strong emotion; and when he heard that St. Aubert had died on the road, and that Emily had been left among strangers, he pressed her hand between his, and involuntarily exclaimed, "Why was I not there!" but in the next moment recollected himself, for he immediately returned to the mention of her father; till, perceiving that her spirits were exhausted, he gradually changed the subject, and spoke of himself. Emily thus learned that, after they had parted, he had wandered for some time along the shores of the Mediterranean, and had then returned through Languedoc into Gascony, which was his native province, and where he usually resided.

When he had concluded his little narrative, he sunk into a silence which Emily was not disposed to interrupt, and it continued till they reached the gate of the château, when he stopped, as if he had known this to be the limit of his walk. Here, saying that it was his intention to return to Estuvière on the following day, he asked her if she would permit him to take leave of her in the morning; and Emily, perceiving that she could not reject an ordinary civility without expressing by her refusal an expectation of something more, was compelled to answer that she should be at home.

She passed a melancholy evening, during which the retrospect of all that had happened since she had seen Valancourt would rise to her imagination, and the scene of her father's death appeared in tints as fresh as if it had passed on the preceding day. She remembered particularly the earnest and solemn manner in which he had required her to destroy the manuscript papers; and awakened from the lethargy in which sorrow had

held her, she was shocked to think she had not yet obeyed him, and determined that another day should not reproach her with the neglect.

CHAPTER X

. . . Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?

Macbeth.

ON the next morning Emily ordered a fire to be lighted in the stove of the chamber where St. Aubert used to sleep, and as soon as she had breakfasted went thither to burn the papers. Having fastened the door to prevent interruption, she opened the closet where they were concealed; as she entered which she felt an emotion of unusual awe, and stood for some moments surveying it, trembling and almost afraid to remove the board. There was a great chair in one corner of the closet, and opposite to it stood the table at which she had seen her father sit, on the evening that preceded his departure, looking over, with so much emotion, what she believed to be these very papers.

The solitary life which Emily had led of late, and the melancholy subjects on which she had suffered her thoughts to dwell, had rendered her at times sensible to the "thick-coming fancies" of a mind greatly enervated. It was lamentable that her excellent understanding should have yielded, even for a moment, to the reveries of superstition, or rather to those starts of imagination which deceive the senses into what can be called nothing less than momentary madness. Instances of this temporary failure of mind had more than once occurred since her return home—particularly when wandering through this lonely mansion in the evening twilight, she had been alarmed by appearances which would have been unseen in her more cheerful days. To this infirm state of her nerves may be attributed what she imagined when, her eyes glancing a second time on the armchair, which stood in an obscure part of the closet, the countenance of her dead father appeared there.

Emily stood fixed for a moment to the floor, after which she left the closet. Her spirits, however, soon returned; she reproached herself with the weakness of thus suffering interruption in an act of serious importance, and again opened the door. By the directions which St. Aubert had given her, she

readily found the board he had described, in an opposite corner of the closet, near the window. She distinguished also the line he had mentioned; and pressing it, as he had bade her, it slid down and disclosed the bundle of papers, together with some scattered ones and the purse of louis. With a trembling hand she removed them—replaced the board—paused a moment—and was rising from the floor, when, on looking up, there appeared to her alarmed fancy the same countenance in the chair. The illusion (another instance of the unhappy effect which solitude and grief had gradually produced upon her mind) subdued her spirits. She rushed forward into the chamber, and sunk almost senseless into a chair.

Returning reason soon overcame the dreadful, but pitiable, attack of imagination, and she turned to the papers, though still with so little recollection, that her eyes involuntarily settled on the writing of some loose sheets which lay open; and she was unconscious that she was transgressing her father's strict injunction, till a sentence of dreadful import awakened her attention and her memory together. She hastily put the papers from her; but the words which had roused equally her curiosity and terror, she could not dismiss from her thoughts. So powerfully had they affected her, that she even could not resolve to destroy the papers immediately; and the more she dwelt on the circumstance, the more it inflamed her imagination. Urged by the most forcible, and apparently the most necessary, curiosity to inquire further concerning the terrible and mysterious subject to which she had seen an allusion, she began to lament her promise to destroy the papers. For a moment she even doubted whether it could justly be obeyed, in contradiction to such reasons as there appeared to be for further information; but the delusion was momentary. "I have given a solemn promise," said she, "to observe a solemn injunction, and it is not my business to argue, but to obey. Let me hasten to remove the temptation that would destroy my innocence, and embitter my life with the consciousness of irremediable guilt, while I have strength to reject it."

Thus reanimated with a sense of her duty, she completed the triumph of her integrity over temptation, more forcible than any she had ever known, and consigned the papers to the flames. Her eyes watched them as they slowly consumed: she shuddered at the recollection of the sentence she had just seen, and at the certainty that the only opportunity of explaining it was then passing away for ever.

It was long after this that she recollected the purse; and as she was depositing it, unopened, in a cabinet, perceiving that it contained something of a size larger than coin, she examined it. "His hand deposited them here," said she, as she kissed some pieces of the coin, and wetted them with her tears—"his hand, which is now dust." At the bottom of the purse was a small packet; which having taken out, and unfolded paper after paper, she found to be an ivory case containing the miniature of a—lady! She started. "The same," said she, "my father wept over!" On examining the countenance, she could recollect no person that it resembled: it was of uncommon beauty; and was characterized by an expression of sweetness shaded with sorrow and tempered by resignation.

St. Aubert had given no directions concerning this picture, nor had even named it; she therefore thought herself justified in preserving it. More than once remembering his manner when he had spoken of the Marchioness of Villeroi, she felt inclined to believe that this was her resemblance; yet there appeared no reason why he should have preserved a picture of that lady, or having preserved it, why he should lament over it in a manner so striking and affecting as she had witnessed on the night preceding his departure.

Emily still gazed on the countenance, examining its features; but she knew not where to detect the charm that captivated her attention, and inspired sentiments of such love and pity. Dark brown hair played carelessly along the open forehead; the nose was rather inclined to aquiline; the lips spoke in a smile, but it was a melancholy one; the eyes were blue, and were directed upwards, with an expression of peculiar meekness; while the soft cloud of the brow spoke of the fine sensibility of the temper.

Emily was roused from the musing mood into which the picture had thrown her, by the closing of the garden gate; and on turning her eyes to the window she saw Valancourt coming towards the château. Her spirits agitated by the subjects that had lately occupied her mind, she felt unprepared to see him, and remained a few moments in the chamber to recover herself.

When she met him in the parlour, she was struck with the change that appeared in his air and countenance since they had parted at Roussillon, which twilight, and the distress she suffered on the preceding evening, had prevented her from observing. But dejection and languor disappeared for a moment, in the smile that now enlightened his countenance on perceiving her. "You see," said he, "I have availed myself of the permission

with which you honoured me—of bidding *you* farewell, whom I had the happiness of meeting only yesterday.”

Emily smiled faintly, and, anxious to say something, asked if he had been long in Gascony.

“A few days only,” replied Valancourt, while a blush passed over his cheek. “I engaged in a long ramble after I had the misfortune of parting with the friends who had made my wanderings among the Pyrenees so delightful.”

A tear came to Emily’s eyes as Valancourt said this, which he observed, and, anxious to draw off her attention from the remembrance that had occasioned it, as well as shocked at his own thoughtlessness, he began to speak on other subjects, expressing his admiration of the château and its prospects.

Emily, who felt somewhat embarrassed how to support a conversation, was glad of such an opportunity to continue it on different topics. They walked down to the terrace, where Valancourt was charmed with the river scenery, and the views over the opposite shores of Guienne.

As he leaned on the wall of the terrace, watching the rapid current of the Garonne, “I was a few weeks ago,” said he, “at the source of this noble river; I had not then the happiness of knowing you, or I should have regretted your absence—it was a scene so exactly suited to your taste. It rises in a part of the Pyrenees still wilder and more sublime, I think, than any we passed in the way to Roussillon.” He then described its fall among the precipices of the mountains, where its waters, augmented by the streams that descend from the snowy summits around, rush into the Vallée d’Aran; between those romantic heights it foams along, pursuing its way to the north-west, till it emerges upon the plains of Languedoc; then, washing the walls of Toulouse, and turning again to the north-west, it assumes a milder character, as it fertilizes the pastures of Gascony and Guienne in its progress to the Bay of Biscay.

Emily and Valancourt talked of the scenes they had passed among the Pyrenean Alps; as he spoke of which there was often a tremulous tenderness in his voice; and sometimes he expatiated on them with all the fire of genius—sometimes would appear scarcely conscious of the topic, though he continued to speak. This subject recalled forcibly to Emily the idea of her father, whose image appeared in every landscape which Valancourt particularized, whose remarks dwelt upon her memory, and whose enthusiasm still glowed in her heart. Her silence at length reminded Valancourt how nearly his conversation

approached to the occasion of her grief, and he changed the subject, though for one scarcely less affecting to Emily. When he admired the grandeur of the plane-tree, that spread its wide branches over the terrace, and under whose shade they now sat, she remembered how often she had sat thus with St. Aubert, and heard him express the same admiration.

"This was a favourite tree with my dear father," said she: "he used to love to sit under its foliage, with his family about him, in the fine evenings of summer."

Valancourt understood her feelings, and was silent: had she raised her eyes from the ground, she would have seen tears in his. He rose, and leaned on the wall of the terrace; from which in a few moments he returned to his seat; then rose again, and appeared to be greatly agitated; while Emily found her spirits so much depressed, that several of her attempts to renew the conversation were ineffectual. Valancourt again sat down; but was still silent, and trembled. At length he said with a hesitating voice, "This lovely scene I am going to leave!—to leave you—perhaps for ever! These moments may never return! I cannot resolve to neglect, though I scarcely dare to avail myself of them. Let me, however, without offending the delicacy of your sorrow, venture to declare the admiration I must always feel of your goodness—oh! that at some future period I might be permitted to call it love!"

Emily's emotion would not suffer her to reply; and Valancourt, who now ventured to look up, observing her countenance change, expected to see her faint, and made an involuntary effort to support her, which recalled Emily to a sense of her situation, and to an exertion of her spirits. Valancourt did not appear to notice her indisposition, but when he spoke again, his voice told the tenderest love. "I will not presume," he added, "to intrude this subject longer upon your attention at this time; but I may perhaps be permitted to mention, that these parting moments would lose much of their bitterness, if I might be allowed to hope the declaration I have made would not exclude me from your presence in future."

Emily made an effort to overcome the confusion of her thoughts and to speak. She feared to trust the preference her heart acknowledged towards Valancourt, and to give him any encouragement for hope, on so short an acquaintance; for though, in this narrow period, she had observed much that was admirable in his taste and disposition, and though these observations had been sanctioned by the opinion of her father, they were not

sufficient testimonies of his general worth, to determine her upon a subject so infinitely important to her future happiness as that which now solicited her attention. Yet, though the thought of dismissing Valancourt was so very painful to her that she could scarcely endure to pause upon it, the consciousness of this made her fear the partiality of her judgment, and hesitate still more to encourage that suit for which her own heart too tenderly pleaded. The family of Valancourt, if not his circumstances, had been known to her father, and known to be unexceptionable. Of his circumstances Valancourt himself hinted, as far as delicacy would permit, when he said he had at present little else to offer but a heart that adored her. He had solicited only for a distant hope; and she could not resolve to forbid, though she scarcely dared to permit it. At length she acquired courage to say, that she must think herself honoured by the good opinion of any person whom her father had esteemed.

"And was I, then, thought worthy of his esteem?" said Valancourt, in a voice trembling with anxiety. Then checking himself, he added, "But pardon the question, I scarcely know what I say. If I might dare to hope that you think me not unworthy such honour, and might be permitted sometimes to inquire after your health, I should now leave you with comparative tranquillity."

Emily, after a moment's silence, said:

"I will be ingenuous with you, for I know you will understand and allow for my situation: you will consider it as a proof of my—my esteem that I am so. Though I live here in what was my father's house, I live here alone. I have, alas! no longer a parent—a parent, whose presence might sanction your visits. It is unnecessary for me to point out the impropriety of my receiving them."

"Nor will I affect to be insensible of this," replied Valancourt, adding mournfully—"But what is to console me for my candour? I distress you; and would now leave the subject if I might carry with me a hope of being some time permitted to renew it—of being allowed to make myself known to your family."

Emily was again confused, and again hesitated what to reply. She felt most acutely the difficulty—the forlornness of her situation—which did not allow her a single relative or friend to whom she could turn for even a look that might support and guide her in the present embarrassing circumstances. Madame Cheron, who was her only relative, and ought to have been this friend, was either occupied by her own amusements, or so

resentful of the reluctance her niece had shown to quit La Vallée, that she seemed totally to have abandoned her.

"Ah! I see," said Valancourt after a long pause, during which Emily had begun and left unfinished two or three sentences. "I see that I have nothing to hope: my fears were too just—you think me unworthy of your esteem. That fatal journey! which I considered as the happiest period of my life—those delightful days were to embitter all my future ones! How often I have looked back to them with hope and fear!—yet never till this moment could I prevail with myself to regret their enchanting influence."

His voice faltered, and he abruptly quitted his seat and walked on the terrace. There was an expression of despair on his countenance that affected Emily. The pleadings of her heart overcame in some degree her extreme timidity; and when he resumed his seat, she said in an accent that betrayed her tenderness:

"You do both yourself and me injustice when you say I think you unworthy of my esteem; I will acknowledge that you have long possessed it, and—and——"

Valancourt waited impatiently for the conclusion of the sentence, but the words died on her lips. Her eyes, however, reflected all the emotions of her heart. Valancourt passed in an instant from the impatience of despair to that of joy and tenderness.

"O Emily!" he exclaimed, "my own Emily—teach me to sustain this moment! Let me seal it as the most sacred of my life!"

He pressed her hand to his lips; it was cold and trembling; and raising her eyes, he saw the paleness of her countenance. Tears came to her relief, and Valancourt watched in anxious silence over her. In a few moments she recovered herself, and smiling faintly through her tears, said: "Can you excuse this weakness? My spirits have not yet, I believe, recovered from the shock they lately received."

"I cannot excuse myself," said Valancourt. "But I will forbear to renew the subject which may have contributed to agitate them, now that I can leave you with the sweet certainty of possessing your esteem."

Then, forgetting his resolution, he again spoke of himself. "You know not," said he, "the many anxious hours I have passed near you lately, when you believed me, if indeed you honoured me with a thought, far away. I have wandered near the château, in the still hours of the night, when no eye could

observe me. It was delightful to know I was so near you; and there was something particularly soothing in the thought that I watched round your habitation while you slept. These grounds are not entirely new to me. Once I ventured within the fence, and spent one of the happiest and yet most melancholy hours of my life, in walking under what I believed to be your window."

Emily inquired how long Valancourt had been in the neighbourhood.

"Several days," he replied. "It was my design to avail myself of the permission M. St. Aubert had given me. I scarcely know how to account for it; but, although I anxiously wished to do this, my resolution always failed when the moment approached, and I constantly deferred my visit. I lodged in a village at some distance, and wandered with my dogs among the scenes of this charming country, wishing continually to meet you, yet not daring to visit you."

Having thus continued to converse without perceiving the flight of time, Valancourt at length seemed to recollect himself.

"I must go," said he mournfully; "but it is with the hope of seeing you again, of being permitted to pay my respects to your family:—let me hear this hope confirmed by your voice."

"My family will be happy to see any friend of my dear father," said Emily.

Valancourt kissed her hand, and still lingered, unable to depart, while Emily sat silently, with her eyes bent on the ground; and Valancourt, as he gazed on her, considered that it would soon be impossible for him to recall, even in his memory, the exact resemblance of the beautiful countenance he then beheld. At this moment a hasty footstep approached from behind the plane-tree, and turning her eyes, Emily saw Madame Cheron. She felt a blush steal upon her cheek, and her frame trembled with the emotion of her mind; but she instantly rose to meet her visitor.

"So, niece!" said Madame Cheron, casting a look of surprise and inquiry on Valancourt—"So, niece! how do you do?—But I need not ask—your looks tell me you have already recovered your loss."

"My looks do me injustice then, madame; my loss, I know, can never be recovered."

"Well, well! I will not argue with you: I see you have exactly your father's disposition; and let me tell you, it would have been much happier for him, poor man! if it had been a different one."

A look of dignified displeasure, with which Emily regarded

Madame Cheron while she spoke, would have touched almost any other heart: she made no other reply; but introduced Valancourt, who could scarcely stifle the resentment he felt, and whose bow Madame Cheron returned with a slight curtsy and a look of supercilious examination. After a few moments he took leave of Emily, in a manner that hastily expressed his pain, both at his own departure and at leaving her to the society of Madame Cheron.

"Who is that young man?" said her aunt, in an accent which equally implied inquisitiveness and censure; "some idle admirer of yours, I suppose? But I believed, niece, you had a greater sense of propriety than to have received the visits of any young man in your present unfriended situation. Let me tell you, the world will observe those things; and it will talk—ay, and very freely too."

Emily, extremely shocked at this coarse speech, attempted to interrupt it; but Madame Cheron would proceed, with all the self-importance of a person to whom power is new.

"It is very necessary you should be under the eye of some person more able to guide you than yourself. I, indeed, have not much leisure for such a task. However, since your poor father made it his last request that I should overlook your conduct, I must even take you under my care. But this let me tell you, niece, that unless you will determine to be very conformable to my direction, I shall not trouble myself longer about you."

Emily made no attempt to interrupt Madame Cheron a second time; grief, and the pride of conscious innocence, kept her silent, till her aunt said:

"I am now come to take you with me to Toulouse. I am sorry to find that your poor father died, after all, in such indifferent circumstances: however, I shall take you home with me. Ah! poor man! he was always more generous than provident, or he would not have left his daughter dependent on his relations."

"Nor has he done so, I hope, madame," said Emily calmly; "nor did his pecuniary misfortunes arise from that noble generosity which always distinguished him: the affairs of M. de Motteville may, I trust, yet be settled without deeply injuring his creditors, and in the meantime I should be very happy to remain at La Vallée."

"No doubt you would," replied Madame Cheron, with a smile of irony; "and I shall no doubt consent to this, since I see how necessary tranquillity and retirement are to restore your spirits. I did not think you capable of so much duplicity, niece. When

you pleaded this excuse for remaining here, I foolishly believed it to be a just one, nor expected to have found with you so agreeable a companion as this M. La Val——: I forget his name.”

Emily could no longer endure these cruel indignities.

“It was a just one, madame,” said she; “and now, indeed, I feel more than ever the value of the retirement I then solicited; and if the purport of your visit is only to add insult to the sorrows of your brother’s child, she could well have spared it.”

“I see that I have undertaken a very troublesome task,” said Madame Cheron, colouring highly.

“I am sure, madame,” said Emily mildly, and endeavouring to restrain her tears, “I am sure my father did not mean it to be such. I have the happiness to reflect that my conduct under his eye was such as he often delighted to approve. It would be very painful to me to disobey the sister of such a parent; and if you believe the task will really be so troublesome, I must lament that it is yours.”

“Well, niece, fine speaking signifies little: I am willing, in consideration of my poor brother, to overlook the impropriety of your late conduct, and to try what your future will be.”

Emily interrupted her to beg she would explain what was the impropriety she alluded to.

“What impropriety!—why, that of receiving the visits of a lover unknown to your family,” replied Madame Cheron; not considering the impropriety of which she herself had been guilty, in exposing her niece to the possibility of conduct so erroneous.

A faint blush passed over Emily’s countenance; pride and anxiety struggled in her breast; and, till she recollected that appearances did, in some degree, justify her aunt’s suspicions, she could not resolve to humble herself so far as to enter into the defence of a conduct which had been so innocent and undesigned on her part. She mentioned the manner of Valancourt’s introduction to her father; the circumstance of his receiving the pistol-shot, and of their afterwards travelling together; with the accidental way in which she had met him on the preceding evening. She owned he had declared a partiality for her, and that he had asked permission to address her family.

“And who is this young adventurer, pray?” said Madame Cheron, “and what are his pretensions?”

“These he must himself explain, madame,” replied Emily. “Of his family my father was not ignorant, and I believe it is unexceptionable.”

She then proceeded to mention what she knew concerning it.

"Oh, then, this it seems is a younger brother!" exclaimed her aunt, "*and of course a beggar. A very fine tale, indeed!* And so my brother took a fancy to this young man after only a few days' acquaintance? But that was so like him! In his youth he was always taking these likes and dislikes, when no other person saw any reason for them at all: nay, indeed, I have often thought the people he disapproved were much more agreeable than those he admired. But there is no accounting for tastes. He was always so much influenced by people's countenances! Now I, for my part, have no notion of this; it is all ridiculous enthusiasm. What has a man's face to do with his character? Can a man of good character help having a disagreeable face?"—which last sentence Madame Cheron delivered with the decisive air of a person who congratulates herself on having made a grand discovery, and believes the question to be unanswerably settled.

Emily, desirous of concluding the conversation, inquired if her aunt would accept some refreshment; and Madame Cheron accompanied her to the *château*, but without desisting from a topic which she discussed with so much complacency to herself and severity to her niece.

"I am sorry to perceive, niece," said she, in allusion to somewhat that Emily had said concerning physiognomy, "that you have a great many of your father's prejudices, and among them those sudden predilections for people from their looks. I can perceive that you imagine yourself to be violently in love with this young adventurer, after an acquaintance of only a few days. There was something, too, so charmingly romantic in the manner of your meeting!"

Emily checked the tears that trembled in her eyes, while she said:

"When my conduct shall deserve this severity, madame, you will do well to exercise it: till then, justice, if not tenderness, should surely restrain it. I have never willingly offended you. Now I have lost my parents, you are the only person to whom I can look for kindness: let me not lament more than ever the loss of such parents."

The last words were almost stifled by her emotions, and she burst into tears. Remembering the delicacy and the tenderness of St. Aubert, the happy, happy days she had passed in these scenes; and contrasting them with the coarse and unfeeling behaviour of Madame Cheron, and with the future hours of

mortification she must submit to in her presence—a degree of grief seized her, that almost reached despair. Madame Cheron, more offended by the reproof which Emily's words conveyed, than touched by the sorrow they expressed, said nothing that might soften her grief; but, notwithstanding an apparent reluctance to receive her niece, she desired her company. The love of sway was her ruling passion, and she knew it would be highly gratified by taking into her house a young orphan, who had no appeal from her decisions, and on whom she could exercise without control the capricious humour of the moment.

On entering the château, Madame Cheron expressed a desire that she would put up what she thought necessary to take to Toulouse, as she meant to set off immediately. Emily now tried to persuade her to defer the journey at least till the next day; and at length, with much difficulty, prevailed.

The day passed in the exercise of petty tyranny on the part of Madame Cheron, and in mournful regret and melancholy anticipation on the part of Emily; who, when her aunt retired to her apartment for the night, went to take leave of every other room in this her dear native home, which she was now quitting for she knew not how long, and for the world to which she was wholly a stranger. She could not conquer a presentiment, which frequently occurred to her this night—that she should never more return to La Vallée. Having passed a considerable time in what had been her father's study; having selected some of his favourite authors to put up with her clothes, and shed many tears as she wiped the dust from their covers; she seated herself in his chair before the reading-desk and sat lost in melancholy reflection; till Theresa opened the door to examine, as was her custom before she went to bed, it was all safe. She started on observing her young lady, who bade her come in, and then gave her some directions for keeping the château in readiness for her reception at all times.

"Alas-a-day! that you should leave it!" said Theresa: "I think you would be happier here than where you are going, if one may judge."

Emily made no reply to this remark. The sorrow Theresa proceeded to express at her departure affected her; but she found some comfort in the simple affection of this poor old servant, to whom she gave such directions as might best conduce to her comfort during her own absence.

Having dismissed Theresa to bed, Emily wandered through every lonely apartment of the château, lingering long in what

had been her father's bedroom, indulging melancholy yet not unpleasing emotions; and having often returned within the door to take another look at it, she withdrew to her own chamber. From her window she gazed upon the garden below, shown faintly by the moon rising over the tops of the palm-trees; and at length the calm beauty of the night increased a desire of indulging the mournful sweetness of bidding farewell to the beloved shades of her childhood, till she was tempted to descend. Throwing over her the light veil in which she usually walked, she silently passed into the garden, and, hastening towards the distant groves, was glad to breathe once more the air of liberty, and to sigh unobserved. The deep repose of the scene, the rich scents that floated on the breeze, the grandeur of the wide horizon and of the clear blue arch, soothed, and gradually elevated her mind to that sublime complacency, which renders the vexations of this world so insignificant and mean in our eyes, that we wonder they have had power for a moment to disturb us. Emily forgot Madame Cheron and all the circumstances of her conduct, while her thoughts ascended to the contemplation of those unnumbered worlds that lie scattered in the depths of ether—thousands of them hid from human eyes, and almost beyond the flight of human fancy. As her imagination soared through the regions of space, and aspired to that Great First Cause which pervades and governs all being, the idea of her father scarcely ever left her; but it was a pleasing idea, since she resigned him to God in the full confidence of a pure and holy faith. She pursued her way through the groves to the terrace, often pausing as memory awakened the pang of affection, and as reason anticipated the exile into which she was going.

And now the moon was high over the woods, touching their summits with yellow light, and darting between the foliage long level beams; while on the rapid Garonne below, the trembling radiance was faintly obscured by the lightest vapour. Emily long watched the playing lustre; listened to the soothing murmur of the current, and the yet lighter sounds of the air as it stirred at intervals the lofty palm-trees.

"How delightful is the sweet breath of these groves!" said she. "This lovely scene!—how often shall I remember and regret it when I am far away! Alas! what events may occur before I see it again! O peaceful, happy shades!—scenes of my infant delights, of parental tenderness now lost for ever!—why must I leave you? In your retreats I should still find safety and repose. Sweet hours of my childhood—I am now to leave even

your last memorials! No objects that would revive your impressions will remain for me!"

Then drying her tears, and looking up, her thoughts rose again to the sublime subject she had contemplated: the same divine complacency stole over her heart, and hushing its throbs, inspired hope and confidence and resignation to the will of the Deity, whose works filled her mind with adoration.

Emily gazed long on the plane-tree, and then seated herself for the last time on the bench under its shade, where she had so often sat with her parents; and where, only a few hours before, she had conversed with Valancourt; at the remembrance of whom, thus revived, a mingled sensation of esteem, tenderness, and anxiety rose in her breast. With this remembrance occurred a recollection of his late confession—that he had often wandered near her habitation in the night, having even passed the boundary of the garden; and it immediately occurred to her that he might be at this moment in the grounds. The fear of meeting him, particularly after the declaration he had made, and of incurring a censure which her aunt might so reasonably bestow, if it was known that she was met by her lover at this hour, made her instantly leave her beloved plane-tree, and walk towards the château. She cast an anxious eye around, and often stopped for a moment to examine the shadowy scene before she ventured to proceed: but she passed on without perceiving any person, till, having reached a clump of almond-trees, not far from the house, she rested to take a retrospect of the garden, and to sigh forth another adieu:—as her eyes wandered over the landscape, she thought she perceived a person emerge from the groves, and pass slowly along a moonlight alley that led between them; but the distance, and the imperfect light, would not suffer her to judge with any degree of certainty whether this was fancy or reality. She continued to gaze for some time on the spot; till on the dead stillness of the air she heard a sudden sound, and in the next instant fancied she distinguished footsteps near her. Wasting not another moment in conjecture, she hurried to the château, and, having reached it, retired to her chamber, where as she closed her window she looked upon the garden, and then again thought that she distinguished a figure gliding between the almond-trees she had just left. She immediately withdrew from the casement, and, though much agitated, sought in sleep the refreshment of a short oblivion.

CHAPTER XI

. . . . I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay;
Each vale romantic; tuneful every tongue—
Sweet, wild, and artless, all.

The Minstrel.

AT an early hour the carriage which was to take Emily and Madame Cheron to Toulouse appeared at the door of the château; and Madame was already in the breakfast-room when her niece entered it. The repast was silent and melancholy on the part of Emily; and Madame Cheron, whose vanity was piqued on observing her dejection, reproved her in a manner that did not contribute to remove it. It was with much reluctance that Emily's request to take with her the dog, which had been a favourite of her father, was granted. Her aunt, impatient to be gone, ordered the carriage to draw up; and while she passed to the hall door, Emily gave another look into the library, and another farewell glance over the garden, and then followed. Old Theresa stood at the door to take leave of her young lady. "God for ever keep you, ma'amselle!" said she; while Emily gave her hand in silence, and could answer only with a pressure of her hand and a forced smile.

At the gate which led out of the grounds, several of her father's pensioners were assembled to bid her farewell; to whom she would have spoken, if her aunt would have suffered the driver to stop; and having distributed to them almost all the money she had about her, she sunk back in the carriage, yielding to the melancholy of her heart. Soon after, she caught between the steep banks of the road another view of the château peeping from among the high trees, and surrounded by green slopes and tufted groves; the Garonne winding its way beneath their shades, sometimes lost among the vineyards, and then rising in greater majesty in the distant pastures. The towering precipices of the Pyrenees, that rose to the south, gave Emily a thousand interesting recollections of her late journey; and these objects of her former enthusiastic admiration now excited only sorrow and regret. Having gazed on the château and its lovely scenery till the banks again closed upon them, her mind became too much occupied by mournful reflections to permit her to attend to the

conversation which Madame Cheron had begun on some trivial topic; so that they soon travelled in profound silence.

Valancourt, meanwhile, was returned to Estuvière, his heart occupied with the image of Emily; sometimes indulging in reveries of future happiness, but more frequently shrinking with dread of the opposition he might encounter from her family. He was the younger son of an ancient family of Gascony; and having lost his parents at an early period of his life, the care of his education and of his small portion had devolved to his brother the Count de Duvarney, his senior by nearly twenty years. Valancourt had been educated in all the accomplishments of his age, and had an ardour of spirit and a certain grandeur of mind, that gave him particular excellence in the exercises then thought heroic. His little fortune had been diminished by the necessary expenses of his education; but M. La Valancourt the elder seemed to think that his genius and accomplishments would amply supply the deficiency of his inheritance. They offered flattering hopes of promotion in the military profession—in those times almost the only one in which a gentleman could engage without incurring a stain on his name; and La Valancourt was of course enrolled in the army. The general genius of his mind was but little understood by his brother. That ardour for whatever is great and good in the moral world, as well as in the natural one, displayed itself in his infant years; and the strong indignation which he felt and expressed at a criminal or a mean action, sometimes drew upon him the displeasure of his tutor; who reprobated it under the general term of violence of temper; and who, when haranguing on the virtues of mildness and moderation, seemed to forget the gentleness and compassion which always appeared in his pupil towards objects of misfortune.

He had now obtained leave of absence from his regiment, when he made the excursion into the Pyrenees which was the means of introducing him to St. Aubert; and as this permission was nearly expired, he was the more anxious to declare himself to Emily's family, from whom he reasonably apprehended opposition, since his fortune, though with a moderate addition from hers it would be sufficient to support them, would not satisfy the views either of vanity or ambition. Valancourt was not without the latter; but he saw golden visions of promotion in the army, and believed that, with Emily, he could in the meantime be delighted to live within the limits of his humble income. His thoughts were now occupied in considering the means of

making himself known to her family, to whom, however, he had yet no address; for he was entirely ignorant of Emily's precipitate departure from La Vallée, of whom he hoped to obtain it.

Meanwhile the travellers pursued their journey; Emily making frequent efforts to appear cheerful, and too often relapsing into silence and dejection. Madame Cheron, attributing her melancholy solely to the circumstance of her being removed to a distance from her lover, and believing that the sorrow which her niece still expressed for the loss of St. Aubert proceeded partly from an affectation of sensibility, endeavoured to make it appear ridiculous to her, that such deep regret continued to be felt so long after the period usually allowed for grief.

At length these unpleasant lectures were interrupted by the arrival of the travellers at Toulouse; and Emily, who had not been there for many years, and had only a very faint recollection of it, was surprised at the ostentatious style exhibited in her aunt's house and furniture; the more so, perhaps, because it was so totally different from the modest elegance to which she had been accustomed. She followed Madame Cheron through a large hall, where several servants in rich liveries appeared, to a kind of saloon fitted up with more show than taste; and her aunt, complaining of fatigue, ordered supper immediately. "I am glad to find myself in my own house again," said she, throwing herself on a large settee, "and to have my own people about me. I detest travelling: though, indeed, I ought to like it, for what I see abroad always makes me delighted to return to my own château. What makes you so silent, child?—what is it that disturbs you now?"

Emily suppressed a starting tear, and tried to smile away the expression of an oppressed heart: she was thinking of *her* home, and felt too sensibly the arrogance and ostentatious vanity of Madame Cheron's conversation. "Can this be my father's sister!" said she to herself; and then, the conviction that she was so warming her heart with something like kindness towards her, she felt anxious to soften the harsh impression her mind had received of her aunt's character, and to show a willingness to oblige her. The effort did not entirely fail; she listened with apparent cheerfulness while Madame Cheron expatiated on the splendour of her house, told of the numerous parties she entertained, and what she should expect of Emily, whose diffidence assumed the air of reserve, which her aunt, believing it to be that of pride and ignorance united, now took occasion to reprehend. She knew nothing of the conduct of a mind that

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Meanwhile the travellers pursued their journey; Emily making frequent efforts to appear cheerful, and too often relapsing into silence and dejection. Madame Cheron, attributing her melancholy solely to the circumstance of her being removed to a distance from her lover, and believing that the sorrow which her niece still expressed for the loss of St. Aubert proceeded partly from an affectation of sensibility, endeavoured to make it appear ridiculous to her, that such deep regret continued to be felt so long after the period usually allowed for grief.

At length these unpleasant lectures were interrupted by the arrival of the travellers at Toulouse; and Emily, who had not been there for many years, and had only a very faint recollection of it, was surprised at the ostentatious style exhibited in her aunt's house and furniture; the more so, perhaps, because it was so totally different from the modest elegance to which she had been accustomed. She followed Madame Cheron through a large hall, where several servants in rich liveries appeared, to a kind of saloon fitted up with more show than taste; and her aunt, complaining of fatigue, ordered supper immediately. "I am glad to find myself in my own house again," said she, throwing herself on a large settee, "and to have my own people about me. I detest travelling: though, indeed, I ought to like it, for what I see abroad always makes me delighted to return to my own château. What makes you so silent, child?—what is it that disturbs you now?"

Emily suppressed a starting tear, and tried to smile away the expression of an oppressed heart: she was thinking of *her* home, and felt too sensibly the arrogance and ostentatious vanity of Madame Cheron's conversation. "Can this be my father's sister!" said she to herself; and then, the conviction that she was warming her heart with something like kindness towards her, she felt anxious to soften the harsh impression her mind had received of her aunt's character, and to show a willingness to oblige her. The effort did not entirely fail; she listened with apparent cheerfulness while Madame Cheron expatiated on the splendour of her house, told of the numerous parties she entertained, and what she should expect of Emily, whose diffidence assumed the air of reserve, which her aunt, believing it to be that of pride and ignorance united, now took occasion to reprehend. She knew nothing of the conduct of a mind that

fears to trust its own powers; which, possessing a nice judgment, and inclining to believe that every other person perceives still more critically, fears to commit itself to censure, and seeks shelter in the obscurity of silence. Emily had frequently blushed at the fearless manners which she had seen admired, and the brilliant nothings which she had heard applauded; yet this applause, so far from encouraging her to imitate the conduct that had won it, rather made her shrink into the reserve that would protect her from such absurdity.

Madame Cheron looked on her niece's diffidence with a feeling very near to contempt, and endeavoured to overcome it by reproof, rather than to encourage it by gentleness.

The entrance of supper somewhat interrupted the complacent discourse of Madame Cheron, and the painful considerations which it had forced upon Emily. When the repast (which was rendered ostentatious by the attendance of a great number of servants, and by a profusion of plate) was over, Madame Cheron retired to her chamber, and a female servant came to show Emily to hers. Having passed up a large staircase, and through several galleries, they came to a flight of backstairs, which led into a short passage in a remote part of the château; and there the servant opened the door of a small chamber, which she said was Ma'amselle Emily's; who, once more alone, indulged the tears she had long tried to restrain.

Those who know from experience how much the heart becomes attached even to inanimate objects to which it has been long accustomed—how unwillingly it resigns them—how, with the sensations of an old friend, it meets them after temporary absence, will understand the forlornness of Emily's feelings—of Emily shut out from the only home she had known from her infancy, and thrown upon a scene and among persons, disagreeable for more qualities than their novelty. Her father's favourite dog, now in the chamber, thus seemed to acquire the character and importance of a friend; and as the animal fawned over her when she wept, and licked her hands:

"Ah, poor Manchon!" said she, "I have nobody now to love me—but you!" and she wept the more.

After some time her thoughts returning to her father's injunctions, she remembered how often he had blamed her for indulging useless sorrow—how often he had pointed out to her the necessity of fortitude and patience; assuring her, that the faculties of the mind strengthen by exertion, till they finally unnerve affliction, and triumph over it. These recollections

dried her tears, gradually soothed her spirits, and inspired her with the sweet emulation of practising precepts which her father had so frequently inculcated.

CHAPTER XII

Some power impart the spear and shield,
At which the wizard passions fly,
By which the giant follies die!

COLLINS.

MADAME CHERON'S house stood at a little distance from the city of Toulouse, and was surrounded by extensive gardens, in which Emily, who had risen early, amused herself with wandering before breakfast. From a terrace, that extended along the highest part of them, was a wide view over Languedoc. On the distant horizon to the south she discovered the wild summits of the Pyrenees, and her fancy immediately painted the green pastures of Gascony at their feet. Her heart pointed to her peaceful home—to the neighbourhood where Valancourt was—where St. Aubert had been; and her imagination, piercing the veil of distance, brought that home to her eyes in all its interesting and romantic beauty. She experienced an inexpressible pleasure in believing that she beheld the country around it, though no feature could be distinguished, except the retiring chain of the Pyrenees; and, inattentive to the scene immediately before her, and to the flight of time, she continued to lean on the window of a pavilion that terminated the terrace, with her eyes fixed on Gascony, and her mind occupied with the interesting ideas which the view of it awakened, till a servant came to tell her breakfast was ready. Her thoughts thus recalled to the surrounding objects, the straight walks, square parterres, and artificial fountains of the garden, could not fail, as she passed through it, to appear the worse opposed to the negligent graces and natural beauties of the grounds of La Vallée, upon which her recollection had been so intensively employed.

"Whither have you been rambling so early?" said Madame Cheron, as her niece entered the breakfast-room; "I don't approve of these solitary walks."

And Emily was surprised, when, having informed her aunt that she had been no farther than the gardens, she understood these to be included in the reproof.

"I desire you will not walk there again, at so early an hour, unattended," said Madame Cheron: "my gardens are very extensive; and a young woman who can make assignations by moonlight at La Vallée, is not to be trusted to her own inclinations elsewhere."

Emily, extremely surprised and shocked, had scarcely power to beg an explanation of these words; and when she did, her aunt absolutely refused to give it; though, by her severe looks and half sentences, she appeared anxious to impress Emily with a belief that she was well informed of some degrading circumstances of her conduct. Conscious innocence could not prevent a blush from stealing over Emily's cheek; she trembled, and looked confusedly, under the bold eye of Madame Cheron, who blushed also; but hers was the blush of triumph, such as sometimes stains the countenance of a person congratulating himself on the penetration which had taught him to suspect another, and who loses both pity for the supposed criminal, and indignation at his guilt, in the gratification of his own vanity.

Emily, not doubting that her aunt's mistake arose from the having observed her ramble in the garden on the night preceding her departure from La Vallée, now mentioned the motive of it; at which Madame Cheron smiled contemptuously, refusing either to accept this explanation, or to give her reasons for refusing it; and soon after she concluded the subject by saying, "I never trust people's assertions: I always judge of them by their actions. But I am willing to try what will be your behaviour in future."

Emily, less surprised by her aunt's moderation and mysterious silence than by the accusation she had received, deeply considered the latter, and scarcely doubted that it was Valancourt whom she had seen at night in the gardens of La Vallée, and that he had been observed there by Madame Cheron; who now, passing from one painful topic only to revive another almost equally so, spoke of the situation of her niece's property in the hands of M. Motteville. While she thus talked with ostentatious pity of Emily's misfortunes, she failed not to inculcate the duties of humility and gratitude, or to render Emily fully sensible of every cruel mortification: who soon perceived that she was to be considered as a dependant, not only by her aunt, but by her aunt's servants.

She was now informed that a large party were expected to dinner; on which account Madame Cheron repeated the lesson of the preceding night, concerning her conduct in company; and Emily wished that she might have courage to practise it.

Her aunt then proceeded to examine the simplicity of her dress, adding, that she expected to see her attired with gaiety and taste. After which she condescended to show Emily the splendour of her château, and to point out the particular beauty or elegance which she thought distinguished each of her numerous suites of apartments. She then withdrew to her toilet, the throne of her homage, and Emily to her chamber, to unpack her books, and to try to charm her mind by reading, till the hour of dressing.

When the company arrived, Emily entered the saloon with an air of timidity which all her efforts could not overcome, and which was increased by the consciousness of Madame Cheron's severe observation. Her mourning dress, the mild dejection of her beautiful countenance, and the retiring diffidence of her manner, rendered her a very interesting object to many of the company; among whom she distinguished Signor Montoni and his friend Cavigni, the late visitors at M. Quesnel's; who now seemed to converse with Madame Cheron with the familiarity of old acquaintance, and she to attend to them with particular pleasure.

This Signor Montoni had an air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield. The quickness of his perceptions was strikingly expressed on his countenance; yet that countenance could submit implicitly to occasion; and more than once in this day the triumph of art over nature might have been discerned in it. His visage was long, and rather narrow; yet he was called handsome: and it was, perhaps, the spirit and vigour of his soul, sparkling through his features, that triumphed for him. Emily felt admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mixed with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore.

Cavigni was gay and insinuating as formerly; and though he paid almost incessant attention to Madame Cheron, he found some opportunities of conversing with Emily, to whom he directed at first the sallies of his wit, but now and then assumed an air of tenderness, which she observed and shrunk from. Though she replied but little, the gentleness and sweetness of her manners encouraged him to talk; and she felt relieved when a young lady of the party, who spoke incessantly, obtruded herself on his notice. This lady, who possessed all the sprightliness of a Frenchwoman with all her coquetry, affected to understand every subject—or, rather, there was no affectation in the case;

for, never looking beyond the limits of her own ignorance, she believed she had nothing to learn. She attracted notice from all—amused some, disgusted others for a moment, and was then forgotten.

This day passed without any material occurrence; and Emily, though amused by the characters she had seen, was glad when she could retire to the recollections which had acquired with her the character of duties.

A fortnight passed in a round of dissipation and company; and Emily who attended Madame Cheron in all her visits, was sometimes entertained, but oftener wearied. She was struck by the apparent talents and knowledge displayed in the various conversations she listened to; and it was long before she discovered that the talents were, for the most part, those of imposture, and the knowledge nothing more than as necessary to assist them. But what deceived her most, was the air of constant gaiety and good spirits displayed by every visitor, and which she supposed to arise from content as constant, and from benevolence as ready. At length, from the over-acting of some less accomplished than the others, she could perceive that, though contentment and benevolence are the only sure sources of cheerfulness, the immoderate and feverish animation, usually exhibited in large parties, results partly from an insensibility to the cares which benevolence must sometimes derive from the sufferings of others, and partly from a desire to display the appearance of that prosperity which they know will command submission and attention to themselves.

Emily's pleasantest hours were passed in the pavilion of the terrace; to which she retired, when she could steal from observation, with a book to overcome, or a lute to indulge her melancholy. There, as she sat with her eyes fixed on the far distant Pyrenees, and her thoughts on Valancourt and the beloved scenes of Gascony, she would play the sweet and melancholy songs of her native province—the popular songs she had listened to from her childhood.

One evening, having excused herself from accompanying her aunt abroad, she thus withdrew to the pavilion, with books and her lute. It was the mild and beautiful evening of a sultry day; and the windows, which fronted the west, opened upon all the glory of a setting sun. Its rays illuminated, with strong splendour, the cliffs of the Pyrenees, and touched their snowy tops with a roseate hue, that remained long after the sun had sunk below the horizon, and the shades of twilight had stolen

over the landscape. Emily touched the lute with that fine melancholy expression which came from her heart. The pensive hour, and the scene; the evening light on the Garonne, that flowed at no great distance, and whose waves as they passed towards La Vallée she often viewed with a sigh--these united circumstances disposed her mind to tenderness; and her thoughts were with Valancourt, of whom she had heard nothing since her arrival at Toulouse; and now that she was removed from him, and in uncertainty, she perceived all the interest he held in her heart. Before she saw Valancourt, she had never met a mind and taste so accordant with her own; and though Madame Cheron told her much of the arts of dissimulation, and that the elegance and propriety of thought, which she so much admired in her lover, were assumed for the purpose of pleasing her, she could scarcely doubt their truth. This possibility, however, faint as it was, was sufficient to harass her mind with anxiety; and she found that few conditions are more painful than that of uncertainty as to the merit of a beloved object--an uncertainty which she would not have suffered, had her confidence in her own opinions been greater.

She was awakened from her musing by the sound of horses' feet along a road that wound under the windows of the pavilion; and a gentleman passed on horseback, whose resemblance to Valancourt, in air and figure (for the twilight did not permit a view of his features), immediately struck her. She retired hastily from the lattice, fearing to be seen, yet wishing to observe further; while the stranger passed on without looking up; and when she returned to the lattice, she saw him faintly through the twilight, winding under the high trees that led to Toulouse. This little incident so much disturbed her spirits, that the temple and its scenery were no longer interesting to her, and after walking a while on the terrace she returned to the château.

Madame Cheron, whether she had seen a rival admired, had lost at play, or had witnessed an entertainment more splendid than her own, was returned from her visit with a temper more than usually discomposed; and Emily was glad when the hour arrived in which she could retire to the solitude of her own apartment.

On the following morning she was summoned to Madame Cheron, whose countenance was inflamed with resentment; and as Emily advanced, she held out a letter to her.

"Do you know this hand?" said she, in a severe tone, and with a look that was intended to search her heart; while Emily

examined the letter attentively, and assured her that she did not.

"Do not provoke me," said her aunt: "you do know it: confess the truth immediately. I insist upon your confessing the truth instantly."

Emily was silent and turned to leave the room; but Madame called her back.

"Oh! you are guilty, then!" said she: "you do know the hand!"

"If you were before in doubt of this, madame," replied Emily, calmly, "why did you accuse me of having told a falsehood?"

Madame Cheron did not blush; but her niece did, a moment after, when she heard the name of Valancourt. It was not, however, with the consciousness of deserving reproof; for, if she had ever seen his handwriting, the present characters did not bring it to her recollection.

"It is useless to deny it," said Madame Cheron; "I see in your countenance that you are no stranger to this letter; and I dare say you have received many such from this impertinent young man, without my knowledge, in my own house."

Emily, shocked at the indelicacy of this accusation still more than by the vulgarity of the former, instantly forgot the pride that had imposed silence, and endeavoured to vindicate herself from the aspersion; but Madame Cheron was not to be convinced.

"I cannot suppose," she resumed, "that this young man would have taken the liberty of writing to me, if you had not encouraged him to do so; and I must now——"

"You will allow me to remind you, madame," said Emily timidly, "of some particulars of a conversation we had at La Vallée. I then told you truly, that I had only not forbidden Monsieur Valancourt from addressing my family."

"I will not be interrupted," said Madame Cheron, interrupting her niece: "I was going to say—I—I—I have forgot what I was going to say.—But how happened it that you did not forbid him?" Emily was silent. "How happened it that you encouraged him to trouble me with this letter?—A young man that nobody knows—an utter stranger in the place—a young adventurer, no doubt, who is looking out for a good fortune. However, on that point he has mistaken his aim."

"His family was known to my father," said Emily modestly, and without appearing to be sensible of the last sentence.

"Oh! that is no recommendation at all," replied her aunt, with

her usual readiness upon this topic; "he took such strange fancies to people. He was always judging persons by their countenances, and was continually deceived."

"Yet it was but now, madame, that you judged me guilty by my countenance," said Emily, with a design of reproving Madame Cheron, to which she was induced by this disrespectful mention of her father.

"I called you here," resumed her aunt, colouring, "to tell you that I will not be disturbed, in my own house, by any letters or visits from young men who may take a fancy to flatter you. This M. de Valentine—I think you call him—has the impertinence to beg I will permit him to pay his respects to me! I shall send him a proper answer. And for you, Emily, I repeat it once for all—if you are not contented to conform to my directions and to my way of life, I shall give up the task of overlooking your conduct—I shall no longer trouble myself with your education, but shall send you to board in a convent."

"Dear madame," said Emily, bursting into tears and overcome by the rude suspicions her aunt had expressed, "how have I deserved these reproofs?" She could say no more; and so very fearful was she of acting with any degree of impropriety in the affair itself, that, at the present moment, Madame Cheron might perhaps have prevailed with her to bind herself by a promise to renounce Valancourt for ever. Her mind, weakened by her terrors, would no longer suffer her to view him as she had formerly done; she feared the error of her own judgment, not that of Madame Cheron; and feared also that, in her former conversation with him at La Vallée, she had not conducted herself with sufficient reserve. She knew that she did not deserve the coarse suspicions which her aunt had thrown out; but a thousand scruples rose to torment her, such as would never have disturbed the peace of Madame Cheron. Thus rendered anxious to avoid every opportunity of erring, and willing to submit to any restrictions that her aunt should think proper, she expressed an obedience; to which Madame Cheron did not give much confidence, and which she seemed to consider as the consequence of either fear or artifice.

"Well, then," said she, "promise me that you will neither see this young man, nor write to him, without my consent."

"Dear madame," replied Emily, "can you suppose I would do either, unknown to you?"

"I don't know what to suppose. There is no knowing how young women will act. It is difficult to place any confidence

in them, for they have seldom sense enough to wish for the respect of the world."

"Alas! madame," said Emily, "I am anxious for my own respect; my father taught me the value of that; he said, if I deserved my own esteem, that of the world would follow of course."

"My brother was a good kind of a man," replied Madame Cheron, "but he did not know the world. I am sure I have always felt a proper respect for myself; yet——" She stopped; but she might have added, "that the world had not always shown respect to her; and this without impeaching its judgment."

"Well!" resumed Madame Cheron, "you have not given me the promise, though, that I demand."

Emily readily gave it; and being then suffered to withdraw, she walked into the garden: tried to compose her spirits; and at length arrived at her favourite pavilion at the end of the terrace, where, seating herself at one of the embowered windows that opened upon a balcony, the stillness and seclusion of the scene allowed her to recollect her thoughts, and to arrange them so as to form a clearer judgment of her former conduct. She endeavoured to review with exactness all the particulars of her conversation with Valancourt at La Vallée; had the satisfaction to observe nothing that could alarm her delicate pride, and thus to be confirmed in the self-esteem which was so necessary to her peace. Her mind then became tranquil; and she saw Valancourt amiable and intelligent as he had formerly appeared, and Madame Cheron neither the one nor the other. The remembrance of her lover, however, brought with it many very painful emotions, for it by no means reconciled her to the thought of resigning him; and Madame Cheron having already shown how highly she disapproved of the attachment, she foresaw much suffering from the opposition of interests: yet with all this was mingled a degree of delight, which, in spite of reason, partook of hope. She determined, however, that no consideration should induce her to permit a clandestine correspondence, and to observe in her conversation with Valancourt, should they ever meet again, the same nicety of reserve which had hitherto marked her conduct. As she repeated the words—"should we ever meet again!" she shrunk, as if this was a circumstance which had never before occurred to her, and tears came to her eyes; which she hastily dried, for she heard footsteps approaching, and then the door of the pavilion open, and, on turning, she saw—Valancourt.

An emotion of mingled pleasure, surprise, and apprehension

pressed so suddenly upon her heart as almost to overcome her spirits: the colour left her cheeks; then returned brighter than before; and she was for a moment unable to speak, or to rise from her chair. His countenance was the mirror in which she saw her own emotions reflected, and it roused her to self-command. The joy which had animated his features when he entered the pavilion was suddenly repressed, as approaching he perceived her agitation, and in a tremulous voice inquired after her health. Recovered from the first surprise, she answered him with a tempered smile; but a variety of opposite emotions still assailed her heart, and struggled to subdue the mild dignity of her manner. It was difficult to tell which predominated—the joy of seeing Valancourt, or the terror of her aunt's displeasure when she should hear of this meeting. After some short and embarrassed conversation, she led him into the gardens, and inquired if he had seen Madame Cheron. "No," said he, "I have not yet seen her, for they told me she was engaged; and as soon as I learned that you were in the gardens I came hither." He paused a moment in great agitation, and then added—"May I venture to tell you the purport of my visit without incurring your displeasure, and to hope that you will not accuse me of precipitation in now availing myself of the permission you once gave me of addressing your family?" Emily, who knew not what to reply, was spared from further perplexity, and was sensible only of fear, when on raising her eyes, she saw Madame Cheron turn into the avenue. As the consciousness of innocence returned this fear was so far dissipated as to permit her to appear tranquil; and instead of avoiding her aunt, she advanced with Valancourt to meet her. The look of haughty and impatient displeasure with which Madame Cheron regarded them, made Emily shrink; who understood, from a single glance, that this meeting was believed to have been more than accidental. Having mentioned Valancourt's name, she became again too much agitated to remain with them, and returned into the château; where she awaited long in a state of trembling anxiety the conclusion of the conference. She knew not how to account for Valancourt's visit to her aunt before he had received the permission he solicited, since she was ignorant of a circumstance which would have rendered the request useless, even if Madame Cheron had been inclined to grant it. Valancourt, in the agitation of his spirits, had forgotten to date his letter; so that it was impossible for Madame Cheron to return an answer! and when he recollected this circumstance, he was perhaps not

so sorry for the omission, as glad of the excuse it allowed him for waiting on her before she could send a refusal.

Madame Cheron had a long conversation with Valancourt; and when she returned to the château, her countenance expressed ill-humour, but not the degree of severity which Emily had apprehended. "I have dismissed this young man at last," said she; "and I hope my house will never again be disturbed with similar visits. He assures me that your interview was not preconcerted."—"Dear madame!" said Emily in extreme emotion, "you surely did not ask him the question?"

"Most certainly I did: you could not suppose I should be so imprudent as to neglect it."

"Good God!" exclaimed Emily, "what an opinion must he form of me, since you, madame, could express a suspicion of such ill conduct!"

"It is of very little consequence what opinion he may form of you," replied her aunt, "for I have put an end to the affair; but I believe he will not form a worse opinion of me for my prudent conduct. I let him see that I was not to be trifled with, and that I had more delicacy than to permit any clandestine correspondence to be carried on in my house."

Emily had frequently heard Madame Cheron use the word delicacy; but she was now more than usually perplexed to understand how she meant to apply it in this instance, in which her whole conduct appeared to merit the very reverse of the term.

"It was very inconsiderate of my brother," resumed Madame Cheron, "to leave the trouble of overlooking your conduct to me. I wish you were well settled in life. But if I find that I am to be further troubled with such visitors as this M. Valancourt, I shall place you in a convent at once: so remember the alternative. This young man has the impertinence to own to me—he owns it!—that his fortune is very small, and that he is chiefly dependent on an elder brother and on the profession he has chosen! He should have concealed these circumstances at least, if he expected to succeed with me. Had he the presumption to suppose I would marry my niece to a person such as he describes himself?"

Emily dried her tears when she heard of the candid confession of Valancourt; and though the circumstances it discovered were afflicting to her hopes, his artless conduct gave her a degree of pleasure that overcame every other emotion. But she was compelled, even thus early in life, to observe, that good sense and noble integrity are not always sufficient to cope with folly and narrow cunning; and her heart was pure enough to allow her,

even at this trying moment, to look with more pride on the defeat of the former, than with mortification on the conquests of the latter.

Madame Cheron pursued her triumph: "He has also thought proper to tell me, that he will receive his dismissal from no person but yourself. This favour, however, I have absolutely refused him: he shall learn, that it is quite sufficient that I disapprove him. And I take this opportunity of repeating,—that, if you concert any means of interview unknown to me, you shall leave my house immediately."

"How little do you know me, madame, that you should think such an injunction necessary!" said Emily, trying to suppress her emotion; "how little of the dear parents who educated me!"

Madame Cheron now went to dress for an engagement which she had made for the evening; and Emily, who would gladly have been excused from attending her aunt, did not ask to remain at home, lest her request should be attributed to an improper motive. When she retired to her own room, the little fortitude which had supported her in the presence of her relation forsook her; she remembered only that Valancourt, whose character appeared more amiable from every circumstance that unfolded it, was banished from her presence—perhaps for ever!—and she passed the time in weeping, which, according to her aunt's direction, she ought to have employed in dressing. This important duty was, however, quickly dispatched; though, when she joined Madame Cheron at table, her eyes betrayed that she had been in tears, and drew upon her a severe reproof.

Her efforts to appear cheerful did not entirely fail, when she joined the company at the house of Madame Clairval, an elderly widow lady, who had lately come to reside at Toulouse on an estate of her late husband. She had lived many years at Paris in a splendid style; had naturally a gay temper; and, since her residence at Toulouse, had given some of the most magnificent entertainments that had been seen in that neighbourhood.

These excited not only the envy, but the trifling ambition of Madame Cheron, who, since she could not rival the splendour of her festivities, was desirous of being ranked in the number of her most intimate friends. For this purpose she paid her the most obsequious attention, and made a point of being disengaged whenever she received an invitation from Madame Clairval; of whom she talked wherever she went, and derived much self-consequence from impressing a belief on her general acquaintance, that they were on the most familiar footing.

The entertainments of this evening consisted of a ball and

supper; it was a fancy ball: and the company danced in groups in the gardens, which were very extensive. The high and luxuriant trees under which the groups assembled were illuminated with a profusion of lamps, disposed with taste and fancy. The gay and various dresses of the company (some of whom were seated on the turf, conversing at their ease, observing the *colillons*, taking refreshments, and sometimes touching sportively a guitar); the gallant manners of the gentlemen; the exquisitely capricious air of the ladies: the light fantastic steps of their dances; the musicians, with the lute, the hautboy, and the tabor, seated at the foot of an elm; and the sylvan scenery of woods around; were circumstances that unitedly formed a characteristic and striking picture of French festivity. Emily surveyed the gaiety of the scene with a melancholy kind of pleasure; and her emotion may be imagined, when, as she stood with her aunt looking at one of the groups, she perceived Valancourt—saw him dancing with a young and beautiful lady—saw him conversing with her with a mixture of attention and familiarity such as she had seldom observed in his manner. She turned hastily from the scene, and attempted to draw away Madame Cheron, who was conversing with Signor Cavigni, and neither perceived Valancourt, nor was willing to be interrupted. A faintness suddenly came over Emily, and, unable to support herself, she sat down on a turf bank beneath the trees, where several other persons were seated. One of these, observing the extreme paleness of her countenance, inquired if she was ill, and begged she would allow him to fetch her a glass of water; for which politeness she thanked him, but did not accept it. Her apprehension lest Valancourt should observe her emotion, made her anxious to overcome it; and she succeeded so far as to recompose her countenance. Madame Cheron was still conversing with Cavigni; and the Count Bauvillers, who had addressed Emily, made some observations upon the scene, to which she answered almost unconsciously; for her mind was still occupied with the idea of Valancourt, to whom it was with extreme uneasiness that she remained so near. Some remarks, however, which the count made upon the dance, obliged her to turn her eyes towards it, and at that moment Valancourt's met hers. Her colour faded again; she felt that she was relapsing into faintness, and instantly averted her looks, but not before she had observed the altered countenance of Valancourt on perceiving her. She would have left the spot immediately, had she not been conscious that this conduct would have shown him more

obviously the interest he held in her heart; and having tried to attend to the count's conversation, and to join in it, she at length recovered her spirits. But when he made some observations on Valancourt's partner, the fear of showing that she was interested in the remark would have betrayed it to him, had not the count, while he spoke, looked towards the person of whom he was speaking. "The lady," said he, "dancing with that young chevalier, who appears to be accomplished in everything but in dancing, is ranked among the beauties of Toulouse. She is handsome, and her fortune will be very large. I hope she will make a better choice in a partner for life than she has done in a partner for the dance; for I observe he has just put the set into confusion—he does nothing but commit blunders. I am surprised that, with his air and figure, he has not taken more care to accomplish himself in dancing."

Emily, whose heart trembled at every word that was now uttered, endeavoured to turn the conversation from Valancourt, by inquiring the name of the lady with whom he danced; but before the count could reply, the dance concluded; and Emily, perceiving that Valancourt was coming towards her, rose and joined Madame Cheron.

"Here is the Chevalier Valancourt, madame," said she in a whisper, "pray let us go." Her aunt immediately moved on, but not before Valancourt had reached them; who bowed lowly to Madame Cheron, and with an earnest and dejected look to Emily; with whom, notwithstanding all her effort, an air of more than common reserve prevailed. The presence of Madame Cheron prevented Valancourt from remaining, and he passed on with a countenance whose melancholy reproached her for having increased it. Emily was called from the musing fit into which she had fallen, by the Count Bauvillers, who was known to her aunt.

"I have your pardon to beg, ma'amselle," said he, "for a rudeness which you will readily believe was quite unintentional. I did not know that the chevalier was your acquaintance when I so freely criticized his dancing."

Emily blushed, and smiled; and Madame Cheron spared her the difficulty of replying.

"If you mean the person who has just passed us," said she, "I can assure you he is no acquaintance of either mine or Ma'amselle St. Aubert's: I know nothing of him."

"Oh! that is the Chevalier Valancourt," said Cavigni carelessly, and looking back.

"You know him, then?" said Madame Cheron.

"I am not acquainted with him," replied Cavigni.

"You don't know, then, the reason I have to call him impertinent:—he has had the presumption to admire my niece!"

"If every man deserves the title of impertinent who admires Ma'amselle St. Aubert," replied Cavigni, "I fear there are a great many impertinents, and I am willing to acknowledge myself one of the number."

"Oh, signor!" said Madame Cheron with an affected smile, "I perceive you have learnt the art of complimenting since you came to France. But it is cruel to compliment children, since they mistake flattery for truth."

Cavigni turned away his face for a moment, and then said with a studied air, "Whom, then, are we to compliment, madame?—for it would be absurd to compliment a woman of refined understanding: *she* is above all praise."

As he finished his sentence, he gave Emily a sly look, and the smile that had lurked in his eye stole forth. She perfectly understood it, and blushed for Madame Cheron; who replied:

"You are perfectly right, signor; no woman of understanding can endure compliment."

"I have heard Signor Montoni say," rejoined Cavigni, "that he never knew but one woman who deserved it."

"Well!" exclaimed Madame Cheron with a short laugh, and a smile of unutterable complacency; "and who could she be?"

"Oh!" replied Cavigni, "it is impossible to mistake her; for certainly there is not more than one woman in the world who has both the merit to deserve compliment and the wit to refuse it: most women reverse the cast entirely."

He looked again at Emily, who again blushed deeper than before for her aunt, and turned from him with displeasure.

"Well, signor!" said Madame Cheron; "I protest you are a Frenchman: I never heard a foreigner say anything half so gallant as that!"

"True, madame," said the count, who had been some time silent, and with a low bow; "but the gallantry of the compliment had been utterly lost, but for the ingenuity that discovered the application."

Madame Cheron did not perceive the meaning of this too satirical sentence, and she therefore escaped the pain which Emily felt on her account.

"Oh! here comes Signor Montoni himself," said her aunt; "I protest I will tell him all the fine things you have been saying

to me." The signor, however, passed at this moment into another walk. "Pray who is it that has so much engaged your friend this evening?" asked Madame Cheron, with an air of chagrin; "I have not seen him once."

"He had a very particular engagement with the Marquis La Rivière," replied Cavigni, "which has detained him, I perceive, till this moment, or he would have done himself the honour of paying his respects to you, madame, sooner, as he commissioned me to say. But, I know not how it is—your conversation is so fascinating, that it can charm even memory, I think; or I should certainly have delivered my friend's apology before."

"The apology, sir, would have been more satisfactory from himself," said Madame Cheron; whose vanity was more mortified by Montoni's neglect than flattered by Cavigni's compliment. Her manner at this moment, and Cavigni's late conversation, now awakened a suspicion in Emily's mind, which, notwithstanding that some recollections served to confirm it, appeared preposterous. She thought she perceived that Montoni was paying serious addresses to her aunt, and that she not only accepted them, but was jealously watchful of any appearance of neglect on his part.—That Madame Cheron, at her years, should elect a second husband, was ridiculous, though her vanity made it not impossible; but that Montoni, with his discernment, his figure, and pretensions, should make choice of Madame Cheron appeared most wonderful. Her thoughts, however, did not dwell long on the subject—nearer interest pressed upon them: Valancourt rejected of her aunt, and Valancourt dancing with a gay and beautiful partner, alternately tormented her mind. As she passed along the gardens, she looked timidly forward, half fearing and half hoping that he might appear in the crowd; and the disappointment she felt on not seeing him, told her that she had hoped more than she had feared.

Montoni soon after joined the party. He muttered over some short speech about regret for having been so long detained elsewhere, when he knew he should have the pleasure of seeing Madame Cheron here: and she, receiving the apology with the air of a pettish girl, addressed herself entirely to Cavigni, who looked archly at Montoni, as if he would have said, "I will not triumph over you too much—I will have the goodness to bear my honours meekly; but look sharp, signor, or I shall certainly run away with your prize."

The supper was served in different pavilions in the gardens, as well as in one large saloon of the château, and with more of

taste than either of splendour or even of plenty. Madame Cheron and her party supped with Madame Clairval in the saloon; and Emily with difficulty disguised her emotion when she saw Valancourt placed at the same table with herself. There Madame Cheron, having surveyed him with high displeasure, said to some person who sat next to her, "Pray, who *is* that young man?"

"It is the Chevalier Valancourt," was the answer.

"Yes; I am not ignorant of his name; but who is this Chevalier Valancourt, that thus intrudes himself at this table?"

The attention of the person to whom she spoke was called off before she received a second reply. The table at which they sat was very long; and Valancourt being seated, with his partner, near the bottom, and Emily near the top, the distance between them may account for his not immediately perceiving her. She avoided looking to that end of the table; but whenever her eyes happened to glance towards it, she observed him conversing with his beautiful companion; and the observation did not contribute to restore her peace, any more than the accounts she heard of the fortune and accomplishments of this same lady.

Madame Cheron, to whom these remarks were sometimes addressed, because they supported topics for trivial conversation, seemed indefatigable in her attempts to deprecate Valancourt; towards whom she felt all the petty resentment of a narrow pride. "I admire the lady," said she, "but I must condemn her choice of a partner."—"Oh, the Chevalier Valancourt is one of the most accomplished young men we have," replied the lady to whom this remark was addressed. "It is whispered that Mademoiselle d'Emery and her large fortune are to be his."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Madame Cheron, reddening with vexation; "it is impossible that she can be so destitute of taste; he has so little the air of a person of condition, that, if I did not see him at the table of Madame Clairval, I should never have suspected him to be one. I have, besides, particular reasons for believing the report to be erroneous."

"I cannot doubt the truth of it," replied the lady gravely, disgusted by the abrupt contradiction she had received concerning her opinion of Valancourt's merit.

"You will not, perhaps, doubt it," said Madame Cheron, "when I assure you that it was only this morning that I rejected his suit."

This was said without any intention of imposing the meaning it conveyed, but simply from a habit of considering herself to be the most important person in every affair that concerned her niece, and because, literally, *she* had rejected Valancourt.

"Your reasons are indeed such as cannot be doubted," replied the lady with an ironical smile.

"Any more than the discernment of the Chevalier Valancourt," added Cavigni, who stood by the chair of Madame Cheron, and had heard her arrogate to herself, as he thought, a distinction which had been paid to her niece.

"His discernment *may* be justly questioned, signor," said Madame Cheron; who was not flattered by what she understood to be an encomium on Emily.

"Alas!" exclaimed Cavigni, surveying Madame Cheron with affected ecstasy, "how vain is that assertion, while that face—that shape—that air—combine to refute it! Unhappy Valancourt! his discernment has been his destruction."

Emily looked surprised and embarrassed: the lady who had lately spoken, astonished; and Madame Cheron, who, though she did not perfectly understand this speech, was very ready to believe herself complimented by it, said, smilingly, "O signor, you are very gallant: but those who hear you vindicate the chevalier's discernment, will suppose that I am the object of it."

"They cannot doubt it," replied Cavigni, bowing low.

"And would not that be very mortifying, signor?"

"Unquestionably it would," said Cavigni.

"I cannot endure the thought," said Madame Cheron.

"It is not to be endured," replied Cavigni.

"What can be done to prevent so humiliating a mistake?" rejoined Madame Cheron.

"Alas! I cannot assist you," replied Cavigni with a deliberating air. "Your only chance of refuting the calumny, and of making people understand what you wish them to believe, is to persist in your first assertion; for, when they are told of the chevalier's want of discernment, it is possible they may suppose he never presumed to distress you with his admiration. But then again, that diffidence, which renders you so insensible to your own perfections, they will consider; and Valancourt's taste will not be doubted, though you arraign it. In short, they will, in spite of your endeavours, continue to believe, what might very naturally have occurred to them without any hint of mine, that the chevalier has taste enough to admire a beautiful woman."

"All this is very distressing!" said Madame Cheron, with a profound sigh.

"May I be allowed to ask you what is so distressing?" said Madame Clairval, who was struck with the rueful countenance and doleful accent with which this was delivered.

"It is a delicate subject," replied Madame Cheron; "a very mortifying one to me."

"I am concerned to hear it," said Madame Clairval. "I hope nothing has occurred, this evening, particularly to distress you?"

"Alas, yes! within this half-hour; and I know not where the report may end. My pride was never so shocked before. But I assure you the report is totally void of foundation."

"Good God!" exclaimed Madame Clairval, "what can be done? Can you point out any way by which I can assist or console you?"

"The only way by which you can do either," replied Madame Cheron, "is to contradict the report wherever you go."

"Well! but pray inform me what I am to contradict."

"It is so very humiliating, that I know not how to mention it," continued Madame Cheron: "but you shall judge. Do you observe that young man seated near the bottom of the table, who is conversing with Mademoiselle d'Emery?"

"Yes; I perceive whom you mean."

"You observe how little he has the air of a person of condition? I was saying just now, that I should not have thought him a gentleman, if I had not seen him at this table."

"Well! but the report," said Madame Clairval; "let me understand the subject of your distress."

"Ah! the subject of my distress!" replied Madame Cheron: "this person whom nobody knows (I beg pardon, madame, I did not consider what I said), this impertinent young man, having had the presumption to address my niece, has, I fear, given rise to a report that he had declared himself my admirer. Now, only consider how very mortifying such a report must be! You, I know, will feel for my situation. A woman of my condition! Think how degrading even the rumour of such an alliance must be!"

"Degrading indeed! my poor friend," said Madame Clairval. "You may rely upon it, I will contradict the report wherever I go." As she said this, she turned her attention upon another part of the company; and Cavigni, who had hitherto appeared a grave spectator of the scene, now fearing he should be unable to smother the laugh that convulsed him, walked abruptly away.

"I perceive you do not know," said the lady who sat near Madame Cheron, "that the gentleman you have been speaking of is Madame Clairval's nephew!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Madame Cheron; who now began

to perceive that she had been totally mistaken in her judgment of Valancourt, and to praise him aloud, with as much servility as she had before censured him with frivolous malignity.

Emily, who during the greater part of this conversation had been so absorbed in thought as to be spared the pain of hearing it, was extremely surprised by her aunt's praise of Valancourt, with whose relationship to Madame Clairvals he was unacquainted, but she was not sorry when Madame Cheron (who, though she now tried to appear unconcerned, was really much embarrassed) prepared to withdraw, immediately after supper. Montoni then came to hand Madame Cheron to her carriage, and Cavigni, with an arch solemnity of countenance, followed with Emily; who, as she wished them good night, and drew up the glass, saw Valancourt among the crowd at the gates. Before the carriage drove off, he disappeared. Madame Cheron forbore to mention him to Emily; and as soon as they reached the *château*, they separated for the night.

On the following morning, as Emily sat at breakfast with her aunt, a letter was brought to her, of which she knew the handwriting upon the cover; and as she received it with a trembling hand, Madame Cheron hastily inquired from whom it came. Emily, with her leave, broke the seal, and observing the signature of Valancourt, gave it, unread, to her aunt, who received it with impatience; and as she looked it over, Emily endeavoured to read on her countenance its contents. Having returned the letter to her niece, whose eyes asked if she might examine it, "Yes, read it, child," said Madame Cheron in a manner less severe than she had expected; and Emily had, perhaps, never before so willingly obeyed her aunt. In this letter Valancourt said little of the interview of the preceding day, but concluded with declaring that he would accept his dismissal from Emily only, and with entreating that she would allow him to wait upon her on the approaching evening. When she read this she was astonished at the moderation of Madame Cheron, and looked at her with expectation as she said sorrowfully: "What am I to say, madame?"

"Why—we must see the young man, I believe," replied her aunt, "and hear what he has further to say for himself. You may tell him he may come." Emily dared scarcely credit what she heard. "Yet stay," added Madame Cheron; "I will tell him so myself." She called for pen and ink; Emily still not daring to trust the emotions she felt, and almost sinking beneath them. Her surprise would have been less, had she

overheard, on the preceding evening, what Madame Cheron had not forgotten—that Valancourt was the nephew of Madame Clairval.

What were the particulars of her aunt's note Emily did not learn, but the result was a visit from Valancourt in the evening; whom Madame Cheron received alone; and they had a long conversation before Emily was called down. When she entered the room, her aunt was conversing with complacency, and she saw the eyes of Valancourt, as he impatiently rose, animated with hope.

"We have been talking over this affair," said Madame Cheron. "The chevalier has been telling me, that the late Monsieur Clairval was the brother of the Countess de Duvarney, his mother. I only wish he had mentioned his relationship to Madame Clairval before: I certainly should have considered that circumstance as a sufficient introduction to my house." Valancourt bowed, and was going to address Emily, but her aunt prevented him. "I have, therefore, consented that you shall receive his visit; and though I will not bind myself to any promise or say that I shall consider him as my nephew, yet I shall permit the intercourse, and shall look forward to any further connexion as an event which may possibly take place in a course of years, provided the chevalier rises in his profession, or any circumstance occurs which may make it prudent for him to take a wife. But M. Valancourt will observe, and you too, Emily, that, till that happens, I positively forbid any thoughts of marrying."

Emily's countenance, during this coarse speech, varied every instant, and towards its conclusion her distress had so much increased that she was on the point of leaving the room. Valancourt meanwhile, scarcely less embarrassed, did not dare to look at her, for whom she was thus distressed; but when Madame Cheron was silent, he said—"Flattering, madame, as your approbation is to me—highly as I am honoured by it—I have yet so much to fear, that I scarcely dare to hope."—"Pray, sir, explain yourself," said Madame Cheron—an unexpected requisition, which embarrassed Valancourt again, and almost overcame him with confusion at circumstances on which, had he been only a spectator of the scene, he would have smiled.

"Till I receive Mademoiselle St. Aubert's permission to accept your indulgence," said he, falteringly—"till she allows me to hope——"

"Oh! is that all?" interrupted Madame Cheron. "Well, I will take upon me to answer for her. But, at the same time, sir,

give me leave to observe to you, that I am her guardian, and that I expect, in every instance, that my will is hers."

As she said this, she rose and quitted the room, leaving Emily and Valancourt in a state of mutual embarrassment; and when Valancourt's hopes enabled him to overcome his fears, and to address her with the zeal and sincerity so natural to him, it was a considerable time before she was sufficiently recovered to hear with distinctness the solicitations and inquiries.

The conduct of Madame Cheron in this affair had been entirely governed by selfish vanity. Valancourt, in his first interview, had, with great candour, laid open to her the true state of his present circumstances and his future expectancies, and she, with more prudence than humanity, had absolutely and abruptly refused his suit. She wished her niece to marry ambitiously; not because she desired to see her in possession of the happiness which rank and wealth are usually believed to bestow, but because she desired to partake the importance which such an alliance would give. When, therefore, she discovered that Valancourt was the nephew of a person of so much consequence as Madame Clairval, she became anxious for the connexion, since the prospect it afforded of future fortune and distinction for Emily, promised the exaltation she coveted for herself. Her calculations concerning fortune, in this alliance, were guided rather by her wishes than by any hint of Valancourt, or strong appearance of probability; and when she rested her expectation on the wealth of Madame Clairval, she seemed totally to have forgotten that the latter had a daughter. Valancourt, however, had not forgotten this circumstance; and the consideration of it had made him so modest in his expectations from Madame Clairval, that he had not even named the relationship in the first conversation with Madame Cheron. But whatever might be the future fortune of Emily, the present distinction which the connexion would afford herself was certain, since the splendour of Madame Clairval's establishment was such as to excite the general envy and partial imitation of the neighbourhood. Thus had she consented to involve her niece in an engagement to which she saw only a distant and uncertain conclusion, with as little consideration of her happiness as when she had so precipitately forbidden it: for though she herself possessed the means of rendering this union not only certain, but prudent, yet to do so was no part of her present intention.

From this period Valancourt made frequent visits to Madame Cheron, and Emily passed in his society the happiest hours she

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From this period Valancourt made frequent visits to Madame Cheron, and Emily passed in his society the happiest hours she

had known since the death of her father. They were both too much engaged by the present moments to give serious consideration to the future. They loved and were beloved, and saw not that the very attachment which formed the delight of their present days might possibly occasion the sufferings of years. Meanwhile, Madame Cheron's intercourse with Madame Clairval became more frequent than before, and her vanity was already gratified by the opportunity of proclaiming, wherever she went, the attachment that subsisted between their nephew and niece.

Montoni was now also become a daily guest at the château, and Emily was compelled to observe that he really was a suitor, and a favoured suitor, to her aunt.

Thus passed the winter months, not only in peace, but in happiness, to Valancourt and Emily; the station of his regiment being so near Toulouse as to allow this frequent intercourse. The pavilion on the terrace was the favourite scene of their interviews, and there Emily with Madame Cheron would work, while Valancourt read aloud works of genius and taste, listened to her enthusiasm, expressed his own, and caught new opportunities of observing that their minds were formed to constitute the happiness of each other; the same taste, the same noble and benevolent sentiments, animating each.

CHAPTER XIII

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid Isles,
Placed far amid the melancholy main
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign
To stand embodied to our senses plain),
Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro,
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous show.

Castle of Indolence.

MADAME CHERON's avarice at length yielded to her vanity. Some very splendid entertainments which Madame Clairval had given, and the general adulation which was paid her, made the former more anxious than before to secure an alliance that would so much exalt her in her own opinion and in that of the world. She proposed terms for the immediate marriage of her

niece, and offered to give Emily a dower, provided Madame Clairval observed equal terms on the part of her nephew. Madame Clairval listened to the proposal, and, considering that Emily was the apparent heiress of her aunt's wealth, accepted it. Meanwhile Emily knew nothing of the transaction, till Madame Cheron informed her that she must make preparation for the nuptials, which would be celebrated without further delay: then, astonished, and wholly unable to account for this sudden conclusion, which Valancourt had not solicited (for he was ignorant of what had passed between the elder ladies, and had not dared to hope such good fortune), she decisively objected to it. Madame Cheron, however, quite as jealous of contradiction now as she had been formerly, contended for a speedy marriage with as much vehemence as she had formerly opposed whatever had the most remote possibility of leading to it; and Emily's scruples disappeared, when she again saw Valancourt, who was now informed of the happiness designed for him, and came to claim a promise of it from herself.

While preparations were making for these nuptials, Montoni became the acknowledged lover of Madame Cheron; and though Madame Clairval was much displeased when she heard of the approaching connexion, and was willing to prevent that of Valancourt with Emily, her conscience told her that she had no right thus to trifle with their peace; and Madame Clairval, though a woman of fashion, was far less advanced than her friend in the art of deriving satisfaction from distinction and admiration, rather than from conscience.

Emily observed with concern the ascendancy which Montoni had acquired over Madame Cheron, as well as the increasing frequency of his visits; and her own opinion of this Italian was confirmed by that of Valancourt, who had always expressed a dislike of him. As she was one morning sitting at work in the pavilion, enjoying the pleasant freshness of spring, whose colours were now spread upon the landscape, and listening to Valancourt, who was reading, but who often laid aside the book to converse, she received a summons to attend Madame Cheron immediately, and had scarcely entered the dressing-room, when she observed with surprise the dejection of her aunt's countenance, and the contrasted gaiety of her dress. "So, niece!" said madame, and she stopped under some degree of embarrassment—"I sent for you; I—I wished to see you: I have news to tell you: from this hour you must consider the Signor Montoni as your uncle—we were married this morning."

Astonished—not so much at the marriage, as at the secrecy with which it had been concluded, and the agitation with which it was announced—Emily at length attributed the privacy to the wish of Montoni, rather than of her aunt. His wife, however, intended that the contrary should be believed, and therefore added, “You see, I wished to avoid a bustle; but now the ceremony is over, I shall do so no longer, and I wish to announce to my servants that they must accept the Signor Montoni for their master.” Emily made a feeble attempt to congratulate her on these apparently imprudent nuptials. “I shall now celebrate my marriage with some splendour,” continued Madame Montoni; “and to save time, I shall avail myself of the preparation that has been made for yours, which will of course be delayed a little while. Such of your wedding clothes as are ready I shall expect you will appear in, to do honour to this festival. I also wish you to inform Monsieur Valancourt that I have changed my name; and he will acquaint Madame Clairval. In a few days I shall give a grand entertainment at which I shall request their presence.”

Emily was so lost in surprise and various thought, that she made Madame Montoni scarcely any reply; but, at her desire, she returned to inform Valancourt of what had passed. Surprise was not his predominant emotion on hearing of these hasty nuptials; and when he learned that they were to be the means of delaying his own, and that the very ornaments of the château which had been prepared to grace the nuptial-day of his Emily were to be degraded to the celebration of Madame Montoni’s, grief and indignation agitated him alternately. He could conceal neither from the observation of Emily; whose efforts to abstract him from these serious emotions, and to laugh at the apprehensive considerations that assailed him, were ineffectual; and when at length he took leave, there was an earnest tenderness in his manner that extremely affected her; she even shed tears, when he disappeared at the end of the terrace, yet knew not exactly why she should do so.

Montoni now took possession of the château, and the command of its inhabitants, with the ease of a man who had long considered it to be his own. His friend, Cavigni, who had been extremely serviceable in having paid Madame Cheron the attention and flattery which she required, but from which Montoni too often revolted, had apartments assigned to him, and received from the domestics an equal degree of obedience with the master of the mansion.

Within a few days, Madame Montoni, as she had promised, gave a magnificent entertainment to a very numerous company, among them was Valancourt, but at which Madame Clairval excused herself from attending. There was a concert, ball, and supper. Valancourt was of course Emily's partner; and though, when he gave a look to the decorations of the apartments, he could not but remember that they were designed for other festivities than those they now contributed to celebrate, he endeavoured to check his concern, by considering that a little while only would elapse before they would be given to their original destination. During this evening, Madame Montoni danced, laughed, and talked incessantly; while Montoni, silent, reserved, and somewhat haughty, seemed weary of the parade, and of the frivolous company it had drawn together.

This was the first and the last entertainment given in celebration of their nuptials. Montoni, though the severity of his temper and the gloominess of his pride prevented him from enjoying such festivities, was extremely willing to promote them. It was seldom that he could meet in any company a man of more address, and still seldomer one of more understanding than himself: the balance of advantage in such parties, or in the connexions which might arise from them, must therefore be on his side: and knowing, as he did, the selfish purposes for which they are generally frequented, he had no objection to measure his talents of dissimulation with those of any other competitor for distinction and plunder; but his wife, who, when her own interest was immediately concerned, had sometimes more discernment than vanity, acquired a consciousness of her inferiority to other women in personal attractions, which, uniting with the jealousy natural to the discovery, counteracted his readiness for mingling with all the parties Toulouse could afford. Till she had, as she supposed, the affections of a husband to lose, she had no motive for discovering the unwelcome truth, and it had never obtruded itself upon her; but now that it influenced her policy, she opposed her husband's inclination for company, with the more eagerness, because she believed him to be really as well received in the female society of the place, as during his addresses to her he had affected to be.

A few weeks only had elapsed since the marriage, when Madame Montoni informed Emily that the signor intended to return to Italy as soon as the necessary preparation could be made for so long a journey. "We shall go to Venice," said she, "where the signor has a fine mansion; and from thence to his estate in

Tuscany. Why do you look so grave, child? You, who are so fond of a romantic country and fine views, will doubtless be delighted with this journey."

"Am I then to be of the party, madame?" said Emily with extreme surprise and emotion.

"Most certainly," replied her aunt: "how could you imagine we should leave you behind? But I see you are thinking of the chevalier: he is not yet, I believe, informed of the journey; but he very soon will be so: Signor Montoni is gone to acquaint Madame Clairval of our journey, and to say that the proposed connexion between the families must be thought of no more."

The unfeeling manner in which Madame Montoni thus informed her niece that she must be separated, perhaps for ever, from the man with whom she was on the point of being united for life, added to the dismay which she must otherwise have suffered at such intelligence. When she could speak, she asked the cause of the sudden change in madame's sentiments towards Valancourt; but the only reply she could obtain was, that the signor had forbade the connexion, considering it to be greatly inferior to what Emily might reasonably expect.

"I now leave the affair entirely to the signor," added Madame Montoni; "but I must say that M. Valancourt never was a favourite with me; and I was over-persuaded, or I should not have given my consent to the connexion. I was weak enough—I am so foolish sometimes!—to suffer other people's uneasiness; and so my better judgment yielded to your affliction. But the signor has very properly pointed out the folly of this; and he shall not have to reprove me a second time. I am determined that you shall submit to those who know how to guide you better than yourself. I am determined that you shall be conformable."

Emily would have been astonished at the assertions of this eloquent speech, had not her mind been so overwhelmed by the sudden shock it had received that she scarcely heard a word of what was latterly addressed to her. Whatever were the weaknesses of Madame Montoni, she might have avoided to accuse herself with those of compassion and tenderness to the feelings of others, and especially to these of Emily. It was the same ambition, that lately prevailed upon her to solicit an alliance with Madame Clairval's family, which induced her to withdraw from it, now that her marriage with Montoni had exalted her self-consequence, and, with it, her views for her niece.

Emily was, at this time, too much affected to employ either remonstrance or entreaty on this topic; and when at length

she attempted the latter, her emotion overcame her speech, and she retired to her apartment, to think (if in the present state of her mind to think was possible) upon this sudden and overwhelming subject. It was very long before her spirits were sufficiently composed to permit the reflection; which, when it came, was dark, and even terrible. She saw that Montoni sought to aggrandize himself in his disposal of her, and it occurred that his friend Cavigni was the person for whom he was interested. The prospect of going to Italy was rendered still darker, when she considered the tumultuous situation of that country—then torn by civil commotion; where every petty state was at war with its neighbour, and even every castle liable to the attack of an invader. She considered the person to whose immediate guidance she would be committed, and the vast distance that was to separate her from Valancourt; and, at the recollection of him, every other image vanished from her mind and every thought was again obscured by grief.

In this perturbed state she passed some hours; and when she was summoned to dinner, she entreated permission to remain in her own apartment: but Madame Montoni was alone, and the request was refused. Emily and her aunt said little during the repast—the one occupied by her griefs, the other engrossed by the disappointment which the unexpected absence of Montoni occasioned; for not only was her vanity piqued by the neglect, but her jealousy alarmed by what she considered as a mysterious engagement. When the cloth was drawn, and they were alone, Emily renewed the mention of Valancourt: but her aunt, neither softened to pity nor awakened to remorse, became enraged that her will should be opposed, and the authority of Montoni questioned, though this was done by Emily with her usual gentleness; who, after a long and torturing conversation, retired in tears.

As she crossed the hall, a person entered it by the great door, whom, as her eyes hastily glanced that way, she imagined to be Montoni; and she was passing on with quicker steps, when she heard the well-known voice of Valancourt.

"Emily, O my Emily!" cried he in a tone faltering with impatience, while she turned, and, as he advanced, was alarmed at the expression of his countenance and the eager desperation of his air. "In tears, Emily!—I would speak with you," said he; "I have much to say: conduct me to where we may converse.—But you tremble—you are ill! Let me lead you to a seat."

He observed the open door of an apartment, and hastily took her hand to lead her thither; but she attempted to withdraw it, and said, with a languid smile, "I am better already; if you wish to see my aunt she is in the dining-parlour."—"I must speak with *you*, my Emily," replied Valancourt. "Good God! is it already come to this?—Are you indeed so willing to resign me?—But this is an improper place—I am overheard. Let me entreat your attention, if only for a few minutes."—"When you have seen my aunt," said Emily.—"I was wretched enough when I came hither," exclaimed Valancourt; "do not increase my misery by this coldness—this cruel refusal."

The despondency with which he spoke this affected her almost to tears; but she persisted in refusing to hear him till he had conversed with Madame Montoni. "Where is her husband? where, then, is Montoni?" said Valancourt in an altered tone: "it is he to whom I must speak."

Emily, terrified for the consequence of the indignation that flashed in his eyes, tremblingly assured him that Montoni was not at home, and entreated he would endeavour to moderate his resentment. At the tremulous accents of her voice his eyes softened instantly from wildness into tenderness. "You are ill, Emily," said he.—"They will destroy us both! Forgive me, that I dared to doubt your affection."

Emily no longer opposed him, as he led her into an adjoining parlour. The manner in which he had named Montoni had so much alarmed her for his own safety, that she was now only too anxious to prevent the consequences of this just resentment. He listened to her entreaties with attention, but replied to them only with looks of despondency and tenderness; concealing as much as possible the sentiments he felt toward Montoni, that he might soothe the apprehensions which distressed her. But she saw the veil he had spread over his resentment; and his assumed tranquillity only alarming her more, she urged at length the impolicy of forcing an interview with Montoni, and of taking any measure which might render their separation irremediable. Valancourt yielded to these remonstrances: and her affecting entreaties drew from him a promise, that, however Montoni might persist in his design of disuniting them, he would not seek to redress his wrongs by violence.—"For my sake," said Emily, "let the consideration of what I should suffer deter you from such a mode of revenge!"—"For your sake, Emily," replied Valancourt, his eyes filling with tears of tenderness and grief, while he gazed upon her. "Yes—yes—I shall subdue myself.

But though I have given you my solemn promise to do this, do not expect that I can tamely submit to the authority of Montoni: if I could, I should be unworthy of you. Yet, O Emily! how long may he condemn me to live without you—how long may it be before you return to France!”

Emily endeavoured to soothe him with assurances of her unalterable affection, and by representing that in little more than a year she should be her own mistress, as far as related to her aunt, from whose guardianship her age would then release her—assurances which gave little consolation to Valancourt, who considered that she would then be in Italy, and in the power of those whose dominion over her would not cease with their rights: but he affected to be consoled by them. Emily, comforted by the promise she had obtained, and by his apparent composure, was about to leave him, when her aunt entered the room. She threw a glance of sharp reproof upon her niece, who immediately withdrew, and of haughty displeasure upon Valancourt.

“This is not the conduct I should have expected from you, sir,” said she: “I did not expect to see you in my house, after you had been informed that your visits were no longer agreeable; much less, that you would seek a clandestine interview with my niece, and that she would grant one.”

Valancourt, perceiving it necessary to vindicate Emily from such a design, explained, that the purpose of his own visit had been to request an interview with Montoni; and he then entered upon the subject of it, with the tempered spirit which the sex rather than the respectability of Madame Montoni demanded.

His expostulations were answered with severe rebuke: she lamented again, that her prudence had ever yielded to what she termed compassion; and added, that she was so sensible of the folly of her former consent, that, to prevent the possibility of a repetition, she had committed the affair entirely to the conduct of Signor Montoni.

The feeling eloquence of Valancourt, however, at length made her sensible, in some measure, of her unworthy conduct; and she became susceptible to shame, but not remorse; she hated Valancourt, who awakened her to this painful sensation; and in proportion as she grew dissatisfied with herself, her abhorrence of him increased. This was also the more inveterate, because his tempered words and manner were such as, without accusing her, compelled her to accuse herself, and neither left her hope that the odious portrait was the caricature of his prejudice, nor afforded her an excuse for expressing the violent

resentment with which she contemplated it. At length, her anger rose to such a height, that Valancourt was compelled to leave the house abruptly, lest he should forfeit his own esteem by an intemperate reply. He was then convinced that from Madame Montoni he had nothing to hope; for what, of either pity or justice, could be expected from a person who could feel the pain of guilt without the humility of repentance?

To Montoni he looked with equal despondency; since it was nearly evident that this plan of separation originated with him, and it was not probable that he would relinquish his own views to entreaties or remonstrances which he must have foreseen, and have been prepared to resist. Yet, remembering his promise to Emily, and more solicitous concerning his love than jealous of his consequence, Valancourt was careful to do nothing that might unnecessarily irritate Montoni: he wrote to him, therefore, not to demand an interview, but to solicit one; and having done this, he endeavoured to wait with calmness his reply.

Madame Clairval was passive in the affair. When she gave her approbation to Valancourt's marriage, it was in the belief that Emily would be the heiress of Madame Montoni's fortune; and though, upon the nuptials of the latter, when she perceived the fallacy of this expectation, her conscience had withheld her from adopting any measure to prevent the union, her benevolence was not sufficiently active to impel her towards any step that might now promote it. She was, on the contrary, secretly pleased that Valancourt was released from an engagement which she considered to be as inferior, in point of fortune, to his merit, as his alliance was thought by Montoni to be humiliating to the beauty of Emily; and though her pride was wounded by this rejection of a member of her family, she disdained to show resentment otherwise than by silence.

Montoni, in his reply to Valancourt, said, that as an interview could neither remove the objections of the one, nor overcome the wishes of the other, it would serve only to produce useless altercation between them; he therefore thought proper to refuse it.

In consideration of the policy suggested by Emily, and of his promise to her, Valancourt restrained the impulse that urged him to the house of Montoni to demand what had been denied to his entreaties: he only repeated his solicitations to see him; seconding them with all the arguments his situation could suggest. Thus several days passed, in remonstrance on one side, and inflexible denial on the other; for whether it was fear,

or shame, or the hatred which results from both, that made Montoni shun the man he had injured, he was peremptory in his refusal, and was neither softened to pity by the agony which Valancourt's letters portrayed, nor awakened to a repentance of his own injustice by the strong remonstrances he employed. At length, Valancourt's letters were returned unopened: and then, in the first moments of passionate despair, he forgot every promise to Emily, except the solemn one which bound him to avoid violence, and hastened to Montoni's château, determined to see him by whatever other means might be necessary. Montoni was denied; and Valancourt, when he afterwards inquired for Madame and Ma'amselle St. Aubert, was absolutely refused admittance by the servants. Not choosing to submit himself to a contest with these, he at length departed, and returning home in a state of mind approaching to frenzy, wrote to Emily of what had passed—expressed without restraint all the agony of his heart—and entreated that, since he must not otherwise hope to see her immediately, she would allow him an interview unknown to Montoni. Soon after he had dispatched this, his passions becoming more temperate, he was sensible of the error he had committed, in having given Emily a new subject of distress in the strong mention of his own suffering, and would have given half the world, had it been his, to recover the letter. Emily, however, was spared the pain she must have received from it, by the suspicious policy of Madame Montoni; who had ordered that all letters addressed to her niece should be delivered to herself, and who, after having perused this, and indulged the expressions of resentment which Valancourt's mention of Montoni provoked, had consigned it to the flames.

Montoni, meanwhile, every day more impatient to leave France, gave repeated orders for dispatch to the servants employed in preparations for the journey, and to the persons with whom he was transacting some particular business. He preserved a steady silence to the letters in which Valancourt, despairing of greater good, and having subdued the passion that had transgressed against his policy, solicited only the indulgence of being allowed to bid Emily farewell. But when Valancourt learned that she was really to set out in a few days, and that it was designed he should see her no more, forgetting every consideration of prudence, he dared, in a second letter to Emily, to propose a clandestine marriage. This also was transmitted to Madame Montoni; and the last day of Emily's stay at Toulouse arrived, without affording Valancourt even a line to soothe

his sufferings, or a hope that he should be allowed a parting interview.

During this period of torturing suspense to Valancourt, Emily was sunk into that kind of stupor with which sudden and irremediable misfortune sometimes overwhelms the mind. Loving him with the tenderest affection, and having long been accustomed to consider him as the friend and companion of all her future days, she had no ideas of happiness that were not connected with him. What then must have been her suffering, when thus suddenly they were to be separated, perhaps for ever—certainly to be thrown into distant parts of the world, where they could scarcely hear of each other's existence;—and all this in obedience to the will of a stranger (for such was Montoni), and of a person who had but lately been anxious to hasten their nuptials! It was in vain that she endeavoured to subdue her grief, and resign herself to an event which she could not avoid. The silence of Valancourt afflicted more than it surprised her, since she attributed it to its just occasion; but when the day preceding that on which she was to quit Toulouse arrived, and she had heard no mention of his being permitted to take leave of her, grief overcame every consideration that had made her reluctant to speak of him, and she inquired of Madame Montoni whether this consolation had been refused. Her aunt informed her that it had; adding that, after the provocation she had herself received from Valancourt in their last interview, and the persecution which the signor had suffered from his letters, no entreaties should avail to procure it.—“If the chevalier expected this favour from us,” said she, “he should have conducted himself in a very different manner: he should have waited patiently, till he knew whether we were disposed to grant it, and not have come and reproved me because I did not think proper to bestow my niece upon him, and then have persisted in troubling the signor because he did not think proper to enter into any dispute about so childish an affair. His behaviour throughout has been extremely presumptuous and impertinent; and I desire that I may never hear his name repeated, and that you will get the better of those foolish sorrows and whims, and look like other people, and not appear with that dismal countenance as if you were ready to cry; for though you say nothing, you cannot conceal your grief from my penetration: I can see you are ready to cry at this moment, though I am reproving you for it—ay, even now, in spite of my command.”

Emily, having turned away to hide her tears, quitted the

room to indulge them; and the day was passed in an intensity of anguish, such as she had perhaps never known before. When she withdrew to her chamber for the night, she remained in the chair where she had placed herself on entering the room, absorbed in her grief, till long after every member of the family, except herself, was retired to rest. She could not divest herself of a belief that she had parted with Valancourt to meet no more—a belief which did not arise merely from foreseen circumstances; for though the length of the journey she was about to commence, the uncertainty as to the period of her return, together with the prohibitions she had received, seemed to justify it, she yielded also to an impression, which she mistook for a presentiment, that she was going from Valancourt for ever. How dreadful to her imagination, too, was the distance that would separate them—the Alps, those tremendous barriers! would rise, and whole countries extend between the regions where each must exist! To live in adjoining provinces, to live even in the same country, though without seeing him, was comparative happiness to the conviction of this dreadful length of distance.

Her mind was at length so much agitated by the consideration of her state, and the belief that she had seen Valancourt for the last time, that she suddenly became very faint; and looking round the chamber for something that might revive her, she observed the casements, and had just strength to throw one open, near which she seated herself. The air recalled her spirits, and the still moonlight, that fell upon the elms of a long avenue fronting the window, somewhat soothed them, and determined her to try whether exercise and the open air would not relieve the intense pain that bound her temples. In the château all was still: and passing down the great staircase into the hall, from whence a passage led immediately to the garden, she softly and unheard, as she thought, unlocked the door, and entered the avenue. Emily passed on, with steps now hurried and now altering, as, deceived by the shadows among the trees, she fancied she saw some person move in the distant perspective, and feared it was a spy of Madame Montoni. Her desire, however, to revisit the pavilion where she had passed so many happy hours with Valancourt, and had admired with him the extensive prospect over Languedoc and her native Gascony, overcame her apprehension of being observed, and she moved on towards the terrace, which, running along the upper garden, commanded the whole of the lower one, and communicated with it by a flight of marble steps that terminated the avenue.

Having reached these steps, she paused a moment to look round; for her distance from the château now increased the fear which the stillness and obscurity of the hour had awakened. But perceiving nothing that could justify it, she ascended to the terrace; where the moonlight showed the long broad walk, with the pavilion at its extremity, while the rays silvered the foliage of the high trees and shrubs that bordered it on the right, and the tufted summits of those that rose to a level with the balustrade on the left from the garden below, her distance from the château again alarming her, she paused to listen; the night was so calm that no sound could have escaped; but she heard only the plaintive sweetness of the nightingale, with the light shiver of the leaves, and she pursued her way towards the pavilion; having reached which, its obscurity did not prevent the emotion that a fuller view of its well-known scene would have excited. The lattices were thrown back, and showed beyond their embowered arch, the moonlight landscape, shadowy and soft—its groves and plains extending gradually and indistinctly to the eye; its distant mountains catching a stronger gleam; and the nearer river reflecting the moon, and trembling to her rays.

Emily, as she approached the lattice, was sensible of the features of this scene only as they served to bring Valancourt more immediately to her fancy. "Ah!" said she with a heavy sigh, as she threw herself into a chair by the window, "how often have we sat together on this spot—often have looked upon that landscape! Never, never more shall we view it together!—never, never more, perhaps, shall we look upon each other!"

Her tears were suddenly stopped by terror: a voice spoke near her in the pavilion—she shrieked: it spoke again; and she distinguished the well-known tones of Valancourt. It was, indeed, Valancourt who supported her in his arms! For some moments their emotion would not suffer either to speak. "Emily," said Valancourt at length, as he pressed her hand in his, "Emily!"—and he was again silent; but the accent in which he had pronounced her name expressed all his tenderness and sorrow.

"O my Emily!" he resumed after a long pause, "I do then see you once again, and hear again the sound of that voice! I have haunted this place, these gardens—for many, many nights—with a faint, very faint hope of seeing you. This was the only chance that remained for me; and, thank Heaven! it has at length succeeded—I am not condemned to absolute despair!"

Emily said something, she scarcely knew what, expressive of

her unalterable affection, and endeavoured to calm the agitation of his mind; but Valancourt could for some time only utter incoherent expressions of his emotions; and when he was somewhat more composed, he said, "I came hither soon after sunset, and have been watching in the gardens and in this pavilion ever since; for though I had now given up all hope of seeing you, I could not resolve to tear myself away from a place, so near to you, and should probably have lingered about the château till morning dawned. Oh, how heavily the moments have passed! yet with what various emotions have they been marked, as I sometimes thought I heard footsteps, and fancied you were approaching, and then again—perceived only a dead and dreary silence! But when you opened the door of the pavilion, and the darkness prevented my distinguishing with certainty whether it was my love, my heart beat so strongly with hopes and fears that I could not speak. The instant I heard the plaintive accents of your voice, my doubts vanished—but not my fears, till you spoke to me; then, losing the apprehension of alarming you in the excess of my emotion, I could no longer be silent.—O Emily! these are moments in which joy and grief struggle so powerfully for pre-eminence, that the heart can scarcely support the contest!"

Emily's heart acknowledged the truth of this assertion. But the joy she felt on thus meeting Valancourt, at the very moment when she was lamenting that they must probably meet no more, soon melted into grief, as reflection stole over her thoughts, and imagination prompted visions of the future. She struggled to recover the calm dignity of mind which was necessary to support her through this last interview, and which Valancourt found it utterly impossible to attain; for the transports of his joy changed abruptly into those of suffering, and he expressed in the most impassioned language his horror of this separation, and his despair of their ever meeting again. Emily wept silently as she listened to him; and then, trying to command her own distress, and to soothe him, she suggested every circumstance that could lead to hope. But the energy of his fears led him instantly to detect the friendly fallacies which she endeavoured to impose on herself and on him, and also to conjure up illusions too powerful for his reason.

"You are going from me," said he, "to a distant country—oh, how distant—! to new society, new friends, new admirers! with people, too, who will try to make you forget me, and to promote new connections! How can I know this, and not know

that you will never return for me—never can be mine?" His voice was stifled by sighs.

"You believe then," said Emily, "that the pangs I suffer proceed from a trivial and temporary interest: you believe——"

"Suffer," interrupted Valancourt, "suffer for me! O Emily, how sweet, how bitter, are those words! what comfort, what anguish, do they give! I ought not to doubt the steadiness of your affection; yet, such is the inconsistency of real love, that it is always awake to suspicion, however unreasonable—always requiring new assurances from the object of its interest: and thus it is, that I always feel revived, as by a new conviction, when your words tell me I am dear to you; and wanting these, I relapse into doubt, and too often into despondency."—Then seeming to recollect himself, he exclaimed, "But what a wretch am I, thus to torture you, and in these moments, too!—I, who ought to support and comfort you."

This reflection overcame Valancourt with tenderness; but, relapsing into despondency, he again felt only for himself, and lamented again this cruel separation, in a voice and words so impassioned that Emily could no longer struggle to repress her own grief, or to soothe his. Valancourt, between these emotions of love and pity, lost the power, and almost the wish, of repressing his agitation: and, in the interval of convulsive sobs, he at one moment kissed away her tears; then told her, cruelly, that possibly she might never weep for him; and then tried to speak more calmly, but only exclaimed, "O Emily—my heart will break!—I cannot, cannot leave you! Now, I gaze upon that countenance, now I hold you in my arms!—a little while, and all this will appear a dream: I shall look, and cannot see you; shall try to recollect your features, and the impression will be fled from my imagination; to hear the tones of your voice, and even memory will be silent!—I cannot, cannot leave you!—Why should we confide the happiness of our whole lives to the will of people who have no right to interrupt, and, except giving you to me, have no power to promote it? O Emily! venture to trust your own heart—venture to be mine for ever!" His voice trembled, and he was silent. Emily continued to weep, and was silent also; when Valancourt proceeded to propose an immediate marriage, and that at an early hour on the following morning she should quit Madame Montoni's house, and be conducted by him to the church of the Augustines, where a friar should await to unite them.

The silence with which she listened to a proposal dictated by

love and despair, and enforced at a moment when it seemed scarcely possible for her to oppose it—when her heart was softened by the sorrows of separation that might be eternal, and her reason obscured by the illusions of love and terror—encouraged him to hope that it would not be rejected.—“Speak, my Emily!” said Valancourt eagerly: “let me hear your voice, let me hear you confirm my fate.”—She spoke not: her cheek was cold, and her senses seemed to fail her; but she did not faint. To Valancourt’s terrified imagination she appeared to be dying: he called upon her name, rose to go to the château for assistance, and then, recollecting her situation, feared to go, or to leave her for a moment.

After a few minutes she drew a deep sigh, and began to revive. The conflict she had suffered, between love and the duty she at present owed to her father’s sister; her repugnance to a clandestine marriage; her fear of emerging on the world with embarrassments, such as might ultimately involve the object of her affection in misery and repentance—all this various interest was too powerful for a mind already enervated by sorrow, and her reason had suffered a transient suspension. But duty and good sense, however hard the conflict, at length triumphed over affection and mournful presentiment. Above all, she dreaded to involve Valancourt in obscurity and vain regret, which she saw, or thought she saw, must be the too certain consequence of a marriage in their present circumstances; and she acted, perhaps, with somewhat more than female fortitude, when she resolved to endure a present, rather than provoke a distant misfortune.

With a candour that proved how truly she esteemed and loved him, and which endeared her to him, if possible, more than ever, she told Valancourt all her reasons for rejecting his proposals. Those which influenced her concerning his future welfare, he instantly refuted, or rather contradicted; but they awakened tender considerations for her, which the frenzy of passion and despair had concealed before; and love, which had but lately prompted him to propose a clandestine and immediate marriage, now induced him to renounce it. The triumph was almost too much for his heart; for Emily’s sake, he endeavoured to stifle his grief; but the swelling anguish would not be restrained.—“O Emily!” said he, “I must leave you—I *must* leave you—and I know it is for ever!”

Convulsive sobs again interrupted his words, and they wept together in silence; till Emily, recollecting the danger of being,

discovered, and the impropriety of prolonging an interview which might subject her to censure summoned all her fortitude to utter a last farewell!

"Stay!" said Valancourt, "I conjure you, stay, for I have much to tell you. The agitation of mind has hitherto suffered me to speak only on the subject that occupied it: I have forborne to mention a doubt of much importance, partly lest it should appear as if I told it with an ungenerous view of alarming you into a compliance with my late proposal."

Emily, much agitated, did not leave Valancourt, but she led him from the pavilion; and as they walked upon the terrace, he proceeded as follows:

"This Montoni—I have heard some strange hints concerning him—are you certain that he is of Madame Quesnel's family, and that his fortune is what it appears to be?"

"I have no reason to doubt either," replied Emily in a voice of alarm. "Of the first, indeed, I cannot doubt; but I have no certain means of judging of the latter, and I entreat you will tell me all you have heard."

"That I certainly will; but it is very imperfect and unsatisfactory information: I gathered it by accident from an Italian, who was speaking to another person of this Montoni. They were talking of his marriage: the Italian said, that if he was the person he meant, he was not likely to make Madame Cheron happy. He proceeded to speak of him in general terms of dislike, and then gave some particular hints concerning his character, that excited my curiosity, and I ventured to ask him a few questions. He was reserved in his replies; but after hesitating for some time, he owned that he had understood abroad that Montoni was a man of desperate fortune and character. He said something of a castle of Montoni's situated among the Apennines, and of some strange circumstances that might be mentioned as to his former mode of life. I pressed him to inform me further; but I believe the strong interest I felt was visible in my manner, and alarmed him; for no entreaties could prevail with him to give any explanation of the circumstances he had alluded to, or to mention anything further concerning Montoni. I observed to him, that if Montoni was possessed of a castle in the Apennines, it appeared from such a circumstance that he was of some family, and also seemed to contradict the report that he was a man of entirely broken fortunes. He shook his head, and looked as if he could have said a great deal, but made no reply.

"A hope of learning something more satisfactory, or more positive, detained me in his company a considerable time, and I renewed the subject repeatedly; but the Italian wrapped himself up in reserve, said that what he had mentioned he had caught only from floating reports, and that reports frequently arose from personal malice, and were very little to be depended upon. I forbore to press the subject further, since it was obvious that he was alarmed for the consequence of what he had already said; and I was compelled to remain in uncertainty on a point where suspense is almost intolerable. Think, Emily, what I must suffer to see you depart for a foreign country, committed to the power of a man of such doubtful character as is this Montoni! But I will not alarm you unnecessarily: it is possible, as the Italian said at first, that this is not the Montoni he alluded to; yet, Emily, consider well before you resolve to commit yourself to him. Oh! I must not trust myself to speak—or I shall renounce all the motives which so lately influenced me to resign the hope of your becoming mine immediately."

Valancourt walked upon the terrace with hurried steps, while Emily remained leaning on the balustrade in deep thought. The information she had just received excited, perhaps, more alarm than it could justify, and raised once more the conflict of contrasted interest. She had never liked Montoni: the fire and keenness of his eye, its proud exultation, its bold fierceness, its sullen watchfulness, as occasion, and even slight occasion, had called forth the latent soul, she had often observed with emotion; while from the usual expression of his countenance she had always shrunk. From such observations she was the more inclined to believe that it was this Montoni of whom the Italian had uttered his suspicious hints. The thought of being solely in his power, in a foreign land, was terrifying to her; it was not by terror alone that she was urged to an immediate marriage with Valancourt: the tenderest love had already pleaded his cause, but had been unable to overcome her opinion, as to her duty, her disinterested considerations of Valancourt, and the delicacy which made her revolt from a clandestine union. It was not to be expected that a vague terror would be more powerful than the united influence of love and grief; but it recalled all their energy, and rendered a second conquest necessary.

With Valancourt, whose imagination was now awake to the suggestion of every passion; whose apprehensions for Emily had acquired strength by the mere mention of them, and became

every instant more powerful as his mind brooded over them—with Valancourt no second conquest was attainable. He thought he saw, in the clearest light, and love assisted the fear, that this journey to Italy would involve Emily in misery: he determined, therefore, to persevere in opposing it, and in conjuring her to bestow upon him the title of her lawful protector.

"Emily!" said he with solemn earnestness, "this is no time for scrupulous distinctions, for weighing the dubious and comparatively trifling circumstances that may affect our future comfort. I now see much more clearly than before the train of serious dangers you are going to encounter with a man of Montoni's character. Those dark hints of the Italian spoke much, but not more than the idea I have of Montoni's disposition, as exhibited even in his countenance. I think I see, at this moment, all that could have been hinted written there. He is the Italian whom I fear; and I conjure you, for your own sake as well as for mine, to prevent the evils I shudder to foresee. O Emily! let my tenderness, my arms withhold you from them—give me the right to defend you."

Emily only sighed; while Valancourt proceeded to remonstrate, and to entreat, with all the energy that love and apprehension could inspire. But, as his imagination magnified to her the possible evils she was going to meet, the mists of her own fancy began to dissipate, and allowed her to distinguish the exaggerated images which imposed on his reason. She considered that there was no proof of Montoni being the person whom the stranger had meant; that, even if he was so, the Italian had noticed his character and broken fortunes merely from report; and that, though the countenance of Montoni seemed to give probability to a part of the rumour, it was not by such circumstances that an implicit belief of it could be justified. These considerations would probably not have arisen so distinctly to her mind, at this time, had not the terrors of Valancourt presented to her such obvious exaggerations of her danger as incited her to distrust the fallacies of passion. But while she endeavoured in the gentlest manner to convince him of his error, she plunged him into a new one: his voice and countenance changed to an expression of dark despair.—"Emily!" said he, "this, this moment is the bitterest that is yet come to me. You do not—cannot love me!—It would be impossible for you to reason thus coolly, thus deliberately, if you did. I, I am torn with anguish at the prospect of our separation, and of the evils that may await you in consequence of it; I would encounter

any hazards to prevent it—to save you. No, Emily! no!—you cannot love me!”

“We have now little time to waste in exclamation or assertion,” said Emily, endeavouring to conceal her emotion: “if you are yet to learn how dear you are, and ever must be, to my heart, no assurances of mine can give you conviction.”

The last words faltered on her lips, and her tears flowed fast. These words and tears brought once more, and with instantaneous force, conviction of her love to Valancourt. He could only exclaim, “Emily! Emily!” and weep over the hand he pressed to his lips; but she, after some moments, again roused herself from the indulgence of sorrow and said—“I must leave you: it is late, and my absence from the château may be discovered. Think of me—love me—when I am far away: the belief of this will be my comfort!”

“Think of you!—love you!” exclaimed Valancourt.

“Try to moderate these transports,” said Emily; “for my sake, try.”

“For your sake!”

“Yes, for my sake,” replied Emily in a tremulous voice: “I cannot leave you thus!”

“Then do not leave me!” said Valancourt with quickness. “Why should we part, or part for longer than till to-morrow?”

“I am, indeed I am, unequal to these moments,” replied Emily; “you tear my heart; but I never can consent to this hasty, imprudent proposal!”

“If we could command our time, my Emily, it should not be thus hasty; we must submit to circumstances.”

“We must, indeed! I have already told you all my heart. My spirits are gone. You allowed the force of my objections, till your tenderness called up vague terrors, which have given us both unnecessary anguish. Spare me! do not oblige me to repeat the reasons I have already urged.”

“Spare you!” cried Valancourt. “I am a wretch, a very wretch, that have felt only for myself!—I, who ought to have shown the fortitude of man, who ought to have supported you;—I have increased your sufferings by the conduct of a child! Forgive me, Emily; think of the distraction of my mind, now that I am about to part with all that is dear to me, and forgive me! When you are gone, I shall recollect with bitter remorse what I have made you suffer, and shall wish in vain that I could see you, if only for a moment, that I might soothe your grief.”

Tears again interrupted his voice, and Emily wept with him.

"I will show myself more worthy of your love," said Valancourt, at length—"I will not prolong these moments. My Emily! my own Emily! never forget me! God knows when we shall meet again! I resign you to His care.—O God! O God! protect and bless her!"

He pressed her hand to his heart. Emily sunk almost lifeless on his bosom, and neither wept nor spoke. Valancourt, now commanding his own distress, tried to comfort and reassure her; but she appeared totally unaffected by what he said; and a sigh which she uttered now and then, was all that proved she had not fainted.

He supported her slowly towards the château, weeping, and speaking to her: but she answered only in sighs, till, having reached the gate that terminated the avenue, she seemed to have recovered her consciousness, and, looking round, perceived how near they were to the château. "We must part here," said she, stopping. "Why prolong these moments? Teach me the fortitude I have forgot."

Valancourt struggled to assume a composed air. "Farewell, my love!" said he in a voice of solemn tenderness, "trust me, we shall meet again—meet for each other—meet to part no more!" His voice faltered, but recovering it, he proceeded in a firmer tone. "You know not what I shall suffer till I hear from you: I shall omit no opportunity of conveying to you my letters; yet I tremble to think how few may occur. And trust me, love, for your dear sake I will try to bear this absence with fortitude. Oh, how little I have shown to-night!"

"Farewell!" said Emily faintly. "When you are gone, I shall think of many things I would have said to you."

"And I of many, many!" said Valancourt. "I never left you yet, that I did not immediately remember some question, or some entreaty, or some circumstance concerning my love, that I earnestly wished to mention, and felt wretched because I could not. O Emily! this countenance on which I now gaze, will in a moment be gone from my eyes, and not all the effort of fancy will be able to recall it with exactness. Oh, what an infinite difference between this moment and the next!—*now*, I am in your presence, can behold you! *then*, all will be a dreary blank,—and I shall be a wanderer, exiled from my own home!"

Valancourt again pressed her to his heart, and held her there in silence, weeping. Tears once again calmed her oppressed mind. They again bade each other farewell, lingered a moment, and then parted. Valancourt seemed to force himself from

the spot—he passed hastily up the avenue; and Emily, as she moved slowly towards the château, heard his distant steps. She listened to the sounds as they sunk fainter and fainter, till the melancholy stillness of night alone remained, and then hurried to her chamber to seek repose, which, alas! was fled from her wretchedness.

CHAPTER XIV

Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untravell'd, still shall turn to thee.

GOLDSMITH.

THE carriages were at the gates at an early hour. The bustle of the domestics passing to and fro in the galleries awakened Emily from harassing slumbers; her unquiet mind had during the night presented her with terrific images and obscure circumstances concerning her affection and her future life. She now endeavoured to chase away the impressions they had left on her fancy; but from imaginary evils she awoke to the consciousness of real ones. Recollecting that she had parted with Valancourt, perhaps for ever, her heart sickened as memory revived. But she tried to dismiss the dismal forebodings that crowded on her mind, and to restrain the sorrow which she could not subdue—efforts which diffused over the settled melancholy of her countenance an expression of tempered resignation, as a thin veil, thrown over the features of beauty, renders them more interesting by a partial concealment. But Madame Montoni observed nothing in this countenance except its unusual paleness, which attracted her censure. She told her niece that she had been indulging in fanciful sorrows, and begged she would have more regard for decorum, than to let the world see that she could not renounce an improper attachment: at which Emily's pale cheek became flushed with crimson—but it was the blush of pride—and she made no answer. Soon after, Montoni entered the breakfast-room, spoke little, and seemed impatient to be gone.

The windows of this room opened upon the garden. As Emily passed them, she saw the spot where she had parted with Valancourt on the preceding night; the remembrance pressed heavily on her heart, and she turned hastily away from the object that had awakened it.

The baggage being at length adjusted, the travellers entered their carriages; and Emily would have left the château without one sigh of regret, had it not been situated in the neighbourhood of Valancourt's residence.

From a little eminence she looked back upon Toulouse, and the far-seen plains of Gascony, beyond which the broken summits of the Pyrenees appeared on the distant horizon, lighted up by a morning sun. "Dear pleasant mountains!" said she to herself, "how long may it be ere I see you again, and how much may happen to make me miserable in the interval! Oh, could I now be certain that I should ever return to you, and find that Valancourt still lived for me, I should go in peace! He will still gaze on you—gaze, when I am far away!"

The trees that impended over the high banks of the road, and formed a line of the perspective with the distant country, now threatened to exclude the view of them; but the bluish mountains still appeared beyond the dark foliage, and Emily continued to lean from the coach window till at length the closing branches shut them from her sight.

Another object soon caught her attention. She had scarcely looked at a person who walked along the bank, with his hat, in which was the military feather, drawn over his eyes, before, at the sound of wheels, he suddenly turned, and she perceived that it was Valancourt himself, who waved his hand, sprung into the road, and through the window of the carriage put a letter into her hand. He endeavoured to smile through the despair that overspread his countenance as she passed on. The remembrance of that smile seemed impressed on Emily's mind for ever. She leaned from the window, and saw him on a knoll of the broken bank, leaning against the high trees that waved over him, and pursuing the carriage with his eyes. He waved his hand, and she continued to gaze until distance confused his figure; and at length another turn of the road entirely separated him from her sight.

Having stopped to take up Signor Cavigni at a château on the road, the travellers, of whom Emily was disrespectfully seated with Madame Montoni's woman in the second carriage, pursued their way over the plains of Languedoc. The presence of this servant restrained Emily from reading Valancourt's letter, for she did not choose to expose the emotions it might occasion to the observation of any person: yet such was her wish to read this his last communication, that her trembling hand was every moment on the point of breaking the seal.

At length they reached the village, where they stayed only to change horses, without alighting; and it was not till they stopped to dine that Emily had an opportunity of reading the letter. Though she had never doubted the sincerity of Valancourt's affection, the fresh assurances she now received of it revived her spirits; she wept over his letter in tenderness, laid it by to be referred to when they should be particularly depressed, and then thought of him with much less anguish than she had done since they parted. Among some other requests which were interesting to her, because expressive of his tenderness, and because a compliance with them seemed to annihilate for a while the pain of absence, he entreated she should always think of him at sunset. "You will then meet me in thought," said he: "I shall constantly watch the sunset; and I shall be happy in the belief that your eyes are fixed upon the same object with mine, and that our minds are conversing. You know not, Emily, the comfort I promise myself from these moments; but I trust you will experience it."

It is unnecessary to say with what emotion Emily, on this evening, watched the declining sun, over a long extent of plains, on which she saw it set without interruption, and sink towards the province which Valancourt inhabited. After this hour, her mind became far more tranquil and resigned than it had been since the marriage of Montoni and her aunt.

During several days the travellers journeyed over the plains of Languedoc; and then entering Dauphiny, and winding for some time among the mountains of that romantic province, they quitted their carriages and began to ascend the Alps. And here such scenes of sublimity opened upon them, as no colours of language must dare to paint! Emily's mind was even so much engaged with new and wonderful images, that they sometimes banished the idea of Valancourt, though they more frequently revived it. These brought to her recollection the prospects among the Pyrenees, which they had admired together, and had believed nothing could excel in grandeur. How often did she wish to express to him the new emotions which this astonishing scenery awakened, and that he could partake of them! Sometimes too she endeavoured to anticipate his remarks, and almost imagined him present. She seemed to have arisen into another world, and to have left every trifling thought, every trifling sentiment, in that below: those only of grandeur and sublimity now dilated her mind, and elevated the affections of her heart.

With what emotion of sublimity, softened by tenderness, did she meet Valancourt in thought, at the customary hour of sunset, when, wandering among the Alps, she watched the glorious orb sink amidst their summits, his last tint die away on their snowy points, and a solemn obscurity steal over the scene! and when the last gleam had faded, she turned her eyes from the west with somewhat of the melancholy regret that is experienced after the departure of a beloved friend; while these lonely feelings were heightened by the spreading gloom, and by the low sounds heard only when darkness confines attention, which made the general stillness more impressive—leaves shook by the air, the last of the breeze that lingers after sunset, or the murmur of distant streams.

During the first days of this journey among the Alps, the scenery exhibited a wonderful mixture of solitude and inhabitation, of cultivation and barrenness. On the edge of tremendous precipices, and within the hollow of the cliffs, below which the clouds often floated, were seen villages, spires, and convent towers; while green pastures and vineyards spread their hues at the feet of perpendicular rocks of marble or of granite, whose points, tufted with Alpine shrubs, or exhibiting only massy crags, rose above each other, till they terminated in the snow-topped mountains, whence the torrent fell and thundered along the valley.

The snow was not yet melted on the summit of Mount Cenis, over which the travellers passed; but Emily, as she looked upon its clear lake and extended plain, surrounded by broken cliffs, saw, in imagination, the verdant beauty it would exhibit when the snows should be gone, and the shepherds, leading up the midsummer flocks from Piedmont to pasture on its flowery summit, should add Arcadian figures to Arcadian landscape.

As she descended on the Italian side, the precipices became still more tremendous, the prospects still more wild and majestic; over which the shifting lights threw all the pomp of colouring. Emily delighted to observe the snowy tops of the mountains under the passing influence of the day—blushing with morning, glowing with the brightness of noon, or just tinted with the purple evening. The haunt of man could now only be discovered by the simple hut of the shepherd and the hunter, or by the rough pine-bridge thrown across the torrent, to assist the latter in his chase of the chamois over crags, where but for this vestige of man, it would have been believed only the chamois or the wolf dared venture. As Emily gazed upon one of these perilous

bridges, with the cataract foaming beneath it, some images came to her mind, which she afterwards combined in the following:

STORIED SONNET

The weary traveller, who all night long
Has climb'd among the Alps' tremendous steeps,
Skirting the pathless precipice, where throng
Wild forms of danger; as he onward creeps,
If, chance, his anxious eye at distance sees
The mountain-shepherd's solitary home
Peeping from forth the moon-illumin'd trees,
What sudden transports to his bosom come!
But if between some hideous chasm yawn,
Where the cleft pine a doubtful bridge displays,
In dreadful silence, on the brink, forlorn
He stands, and views in the faint rays,
Far, far below the torrent's rising surge,
And listens to the wild impetuous roar;
Still eyes the depth, still shudders on the verge,
Fears to return, nor dares to venture o'er.
Desperate, at length the tottering plank he tries,
His weak steps slide, he shrieks, he sinks—he dies!

Emily, often as she travelled among the clouds, watched in silent awe their billowy surges rolling below: sometimes, wholly closing upon the scene, they appeared like a world of chaos; and at others, spreading thinly, they opened and admitted partial catches of the landscape—the torrent, whose astounding roar had never failed, tumbling down the rocky chasm, huge cliffs, white with snow, or the dark summits of the pine forests that stretched midway down the mountains. But who may describe her rapture, when, having passed through a sea of vapour, she caught a first view of Italy; when, from the ridge of one of those tremendous precipices that hang upon Mount Cenis and guard the entrance of that enchanting country, she looked down through the lower clouds, and, as they floated away, saw the grassy vales of Piedmont at her feet, and beyond, the plains of Lombardy extending to the farthest distance, at which appeared, on the faint horizon, the doubtful towers of Turin?

The solitary grandeur of the objects that immediately surrounded her—the mountain region towering above; the deep precipices that fell beneath; the waving blackness of the forests of pine and oak, which skirted their feet, or hung within their recesses; the headlong torrents that, dashing among their cliffs, sometimes appeared like a cloud of mist, at others like a sheet of ice—these were features which received a higher character

of sublimity from the reposing beauty of the Italian landscape below, stretching to the wide horizon, where the same melting blue tint seemed to unite earth and sky.

Madame Montoni only shuddered as she looked down precipices near whose edges the chairmen trotted as lightly and swiftly, almost, as the chamois bounded; and from which Emily, too, recoiled; but with her fears were mingled such various emotions of delight, such admiration, astonishment, and awe, as she had never experienced before.

Meanwhile, the carriers, having come to a landing-place, stopped to rest; and the travellers being seated on the point of a cliff, Montoni and Cavigni renewed a dispute concerning Hannibal's passage over the Alps—Montoni contending that he entered Italy by way of Mount Cenis; and Cavigni, that he passed over Mount St. Bernard. The subject brought to Emily's imagination the disasters he had suffered in his bold and perilous adventure. She saw his vast armies winding among the defiles, and over the tremendous cliffs of the mountains, which at night were lighted up by his fires, or by the torches which he caused to be carried when he pursued his indefatigable march. In the eye of fancy, she perceived the gleam of arms through the duskiness of night, the glitter of spears and helmets, and the banners floating dimly on the twilight; while now and then the blast of a distant trumpet echoed along the defile, and the signal was answered by a momentary clash of arms. She looked with horror upon the mountaineers perched on the higher cliffs, assailing the troops below with broken fragments of the mountain; on soldiers and elephants tumbling headlong down the lower precipices: and, as she listened to the rebounding rocks that followed their fall, the terrors of fancy yielded to those of reality, and she shuddered to behold herself on the dizzy height whence she had pictured the descent of others.

Madame Montoni, meantime, as she looked upon Italy, was contemplating, in imagination, the splendour of palaces, and the grandeur of castles, such as she believed she was going to be mistress of at Venice and in the Apennine; and she became, in idea, little less than a princess. Being no longer under the alarms which had deterred her from giving entertainments to the beauties of Toulouse, whom Montoni had mentioned with more *éclat* to his own vanity than credit to their discretion or regard to truth, she determined to give concerts, though she had neither ear nor taste for music; *conversazioni*, though she had no talents for conversation; and to outvie, if possible, in the gaieties of

her parties, and the magnificence of her liveries, all the *noblesse* of Venice. This blissful reverie was somewhat obscured, when she recollected the signor, her husband, who, though he was not averse to the profit which sometimes results from such parties, had always shown a contempt of the frivolous parade that sometimes attends them; till she considered that his pride might be gratified by displaying among his own friends, in his own city, the wealth which he had neglected in France; and she courted again the splendid illusions that had charmed her before.

The travellers, as they descended, gradually exchanged the region of winter for the genial warmth and beauty of spring. The sky began to assume that serene and beautiful tint peculiar to the climate of Italy; patches of young verdure, fragrant shrubs and flowers, looked gaily among the rocks, often fringing their rugged brows, or hanging in tufts from their broken sides; and the buds of the oak and mountain-ash were expanding into foliage. Descending lower, the orange and the myrtle every now and then appeared in some sunny nook, with their yellow blossoms peeping from among the dark green of their leaves, and mingling with the scarlet flowers of the pomegranate and the paler ones of the arbutus, that ran mantling to the crags above; while, lower still, spread the pastures of Piedmont, where early flocks were cropping the luxuriant herbage of spring.

The river Doria, which, rising on the summit of Mount Cenis, had dashed for many leagues over the precipices that bordered the road, now began to assume a less impetuous, though scarcely less romantic character, as it approached the green valleys of Piedmont, into which the travellers descended with the evening sun; and Emily found herself once more amid the tranquil beauty of pastoral scenery; among flocks and herds, and slopes tufted with woods of lively verdure, and with beautiful shrubs, such as she had often seen waving luxuriantly over the Alps above. The verdure of the pasturage, now varied with the hues of early flowers, among which were yellow ranunculuses and pansy violets of delicious fragrance, she had never seen excelled.—Emily almost wished to become a peasant of Piedmont, to inhabit one of the pleasant embowered cottages which she saw peeping beneath the cliffs, and to pass her careless hours among these romantic landscapes. To the hours, the months, she was to pass under the domain of Montoni she looked with apprehension; while those which were departed she remembered with regret and sorrow.

In her present scenes her fancy often gave her the figure of

Valancourt, whom she saw on a point of the cliffs gazing with awe and admiration at the imagery around him: or wandering pensively along the vale below, frequently pausing to look back upon the scenery; and then, his countenance glowing with the poet's fire, pursuing his way to some overhanging height. When she again considered the time and the distance that were to separate them, that every step she now took lengthened this distance, her heart sunk, and the surrounding landscape charmed her no more.

The travellers, passing Novalesa, reached, after the evening had closed, the small and ancient town of Susa, which had formerly guarded this pass of the Alps into Piedmont. The heights which command it, had, since the invention of artillery, rendered its fortifications useless; but these romantic heights, seen by moonlight, with the town below surrounded by its walls and watch-towers, and partially illumined, exhibited an interesting picture to Emily. Here they rested for the night, at an inn which had little accommodation to boast of; but the travellers brought with them the hunger that gives delicious flavour to the coarsest viands, and the weariness that ensures repose; and here Emily first caught a strain of Italian music on Italian ground. As she sat, after supper, at a little window that opened upon the country, observing an effect of the moonlight on the broken surface of the mountains, and remembering that on such a night as this she once had sat with her father and Valancourt resting upon a cliff of the Pyrenees, she heard from below the long-drawn notes of a violin, of such tone and delicacy of expression as harmonized exactly with the tender emotions she was indulging, and both charmed and surprised her. Cavigni, who approached the window, smiled at her surprise. "This is nothing extraordinary," said he, "you will hear the same, perhaps, at every inn in our way. It is one of our landlord's family who plays, I doubt not." Emily, as she listened, thought he could be scarcely less than a professor of music whom she heard; and the sweet and plaintive strains soon lulled her into a reverie; from which she was very unwillingly roused by the raillery of Cavigni, and by the voice of Montoni, who gave orders to a servant to have the carriages ready at an early hour on the following morning, and added, that he meant to dine at Turin.

Madame Montoni was exceedingly rejoiced to be once more on level ground; and after giving a long detail of the various terrors she had suffered, which she forgot that she was describing to the companions of her dangers, she added a hope that she

should soon be beyond the view of these horrid mountains, "which all the world," said she, "should not tempt me to cross again." Complaining of fatigue, she soon retired to rest, and Emily withdrew to her own room; when she understood from Annette, her aunt's woman, that Cavigni was nearly right in his conjecture concerning the musician who had awakened the violin with so much taste, for that he was the son of a peasant inhabiting the neighbouring valley. "He is going to the Carnival at Venice," added Annette; "for they say he has a fine hand at playing, and will get a world of money: and the Carnival is just going to begin; but for my part, I should like to live among these pleasant woods and hills, better than in a town; and they say, ma'amselle, we shall see no woods or hills, or fields, at Venice, for that it is built in the very middle of the sea."

Emily agreed with the talkative Annette, that this young man was making a change for the worse; and could not forbear silently lamenting that he should be drawn from the innocence and beauty of these scenes, to the corrupt ones of that voluptuous city.

When she was alone, unable to sleep, the landscapes of her native home, with Valancourt, and the circumstances of her departure, haunted her fancy: she drew pictures of social happiness amidst the grand simplicity of nature, such as she feared she had bade farewell to for ever; and then the idea of this young Piedmontese, thus ignorantly sporting with his happiness, returned to her thoughts; and glad to escape awhile from the pressure of nearer interests, she indulged her fancy in composing the following lines:

THE PIEDMONTESE.

Ah, merry swain! who laugh'd along the vales
 And with your gay pipe made the mountains ring,
 Why leave your cot, your woods, and thymy gales,
 And friends beloved, for aught that wealth can bring!
 He goes to wake o'er moonlight seas the string—
 Venetian gold his untaught fancy hails!
 Yet oft of home his simple carols sing,
 And his steps pause, as the last Alp he scales.
 Once more he turns to view his native scene—
 Far, far below, as roll the clouds away,
 He spies his cabin 'mid the pine-tops green,
 The well-known woods, clear brook, and pastures gay;
 And thinks of friends and parents left behind,
 Of sylvan revels, dance, and festive song;
 And hears the faint reed swelling in the wind,

And his sad sighs the distant notes prolong!
 Thus went the swain, till mountain-shadows fell,
 And dimm'd the landscape to his aching sight:
 And must he leave the vale he loves so well?
 Can foreign wealth, and shows, his heart delight?
 No, happy vales! your wild rocks still shall hear
 His pipe light sounding on the morning breeze;
 Still shall he lead the flocks to streamlet clear,
 And watch at eve beneath the western trees.
 Away, Venetian gold—your charm is o'er!
 And now his swift step seeks the lowland bowers,
 Where, through the leaves, his cottage light *once more*
 Guides him to happy friends and jocund hours.
 Ah, merry swain! that laugh along the vales,
 And with your gay pipe make the mountains ring,
 Your cot, your wood, your thymy-scented gales,
 And friends beloved, more joy than wealth can bring.

CHAPTER XV

Titania. If you will patiently dance in our round
 And see our moonlight revels, go with us.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

EARLY on the following morning the travellers set out for Turin. The luxuriant plain that extends from the feet of the Alps to that magnificent city, was not then, as now, shaded by an avenue of trees nine miles in length; but plantations of olives, mulberry, and palms, festooned with vines, mingled with the pastoral scenery through which the rapid Po, after its descent from the mountains, wandered to meet the humble Doria at Turin. As they advanced towards the city, the Alps, seen at some distance, began to appear in all their awful sublimity; chain rising over chain in long succession, their higher points darkened by the hovering clouds sometimes hid, and at others seen shooting up far above them; while their lower steepes, broken into fantastic forms, were touched with blue and purplish tints, which, as they changed in light and shade, seemed to open new scenes to the eye. To the east stretched the plains of Lombardy, with the towers of Turin rising at a distance; and beyond, the Apennines bounding the horizon.

The general magnificence of that city, with its vistas of churches and palaces branching from the grand square, each opening to a landscape of the distant Alps or Apennines, was not only such

as Emily had never seen in France, but such as she had never imagined.

Montoni, who had been often at Turin, and cared little about views of any kind, did not comply with his wife's request that they might survey some of the palaces; but staying only till the necessary refreshments could be obtained, they set forward for Venice with all possible rapidity. Montoni's manner during this journey was grave, and even haughty; and towards Madame Montoni he was more especially reserved; but it was not the reserve of respect, so much as of pride and discontent. Of Emily he took little notice. With Cavigni his conversations were commonly on political or military topics, such as the convulsed state of their country rendered at this time particularly interesting. Emily observed that, at the mention of any daring exploit, Montoni's eyes lost their sullenness, and seemed instantaneously to gleam with fire; yet they still retained somewhat of a lurking cunning, and she sometimes thought that their fire partook more of the glare of malice than the brightness of valour, though the latter would well have harmonized with the high chivalric air of his figure, in which Cavigni, with all his gay and gallant manners, was his inferior.

On entering the Milanese, the gentlemen exchanged their French hats for the Italian cap of scarlet cloth embroidered; and Emily was somewhat surprised to observe that Montoni added to his the military plume, while Cavigni retained only the feather which was usually worn with such caps; but she at length concluded that Montoni assumed this ensign of a soldier for convenience, as a means of passing with more safety through a country overrun with parties of the military.

Over the beautiful plains of this country the devastations of war were frequently visible. Where the lands had not been suffered to lie uncultivated, they were often tracked with the steps of the spoiler; the vines were torn down from the branches that had supported them, the olives trampled upon the ground, and even the groves of mulberry-trees had been hewn by the enemy to light fires that destroyed the hamlets and villages of their owners. Emily turned her eyes with a sigh from these painful vestiges of contention, to the Alps of the Grison, that overlooked them to the north, whose awful solitudes seemed to offer to persecuted man a secure asylum.

The travellers frequently distinguished troops of soldiers moving at a distance: and they experienced at the little inns on the road the scarcity of provision, and other inconveniences

which are a part of the consequence of intestine war; but they had never reason to be much alarmed for their immediate safety, and they passed on to Milan with little interruption of any kind, where they stayed not to survey the grandeur of the city, or even to view its vast cathedral which was then building.

Beyond Milan, the country wore the aspect of a ruder devastation; and though everything seemed now quiet, the repose was like that of death spread over features which retain the impression of the last convulsions.

It was not till they had passed the eastern limits of the Milanese, that the travellers saw any troops since they had left Milan; when, as the evening was drawing to a close, they descried what appeared to be an army winding onward along the distant plains, whose spears and other arms caught the last rays of the sun. As the column advanced through a part of the road contracted between two hillocks, some of the commanders on horseback were distinguished on a small eminence, pointing and making signals for the march; while several of the officers were riding along the line, directing its progress according to the signs communicated by those above; and others, separating from the vanguard, which had emerged from the pass, were riding carelessly along the plains at some distance to the right of the the army.

As they drew nearer, Montoni, distinguishing the feathers that waved in their caps, and the banners and liveries of the bands that followed them, thought he knew this to be the small army commanded by the famous captain Ubaldo, with whom, as well as with some of the other chiefs, he was personally acquainted. He therefore gave orders that the carriages should draw up by the side of the road, to await their arrival, and give them the pass. A faint strain of martial music now stole by, and gradually strengthening as the troops approached, Emily distinguished the drums and trumpets, with the clash of cymbals and of arms that were struck by a small party in time to the march.

Montoni, being now certain that these were the bands of the victorious Ubaldo, leaned from the carriage window, and hailed their general by waving his cap in the air, which compliment the chief returned by raising his spear and then letting it down again suddenly, while some of his officers, who were riding at a distance from the troops, came up to the carriage and saluted Montoni as an old acquaintance. The captain himself soon after arriving, his bands halted while he conversed with Montoni,

whom he appeared much rejoiced to see; and from what he said, Emily understood that this was a victorious army returning into their own principality; while the numerous wagons that accompanied them contained the rich spoils of the enemy, their own wounded soldiers, and the prisoners they had taken in battle, who were to be ransomed when the peace, then negotiating between the neighbouring states, should be ratified. The chiefs on the following day were to separate, and each taking his share of the spoil was to return with his own band to his castle. This was therefore to be an evening of uncommon and general festivity, in commemoration of the victory they had accomplished together, and of the farewell which the commanders were about to take of each other.

Emily, as these officers conversed with Montoni, observed with admiration, tinged with awe, their high martial air, mingled with the haughtiness of the *noblesse* of those days, and heightened by the gallantry of their dress, by the plumes towering on their caps, the armorial coat, Persian sash, and ancient Spanish cloak. Utaldo, telling Montoni that his army were going to encamp for the night near a village at only a few miles' distance, invited him to turn back and partake of their festivity, assuring the ladies also, that they should be pleasantly accommodated: but Montoni excused himself, adding, that it was his design to reach Verona that evening; and after some conversation concerning the state of the country towards that city, they parted.

The travellers proceeded without any interruption; but it was some hours after sunset before they arrived at Verona, whose beautiful environs were therefore not seen by Emily till the following morning; when, leaving that pleasant town at an early hour, they set off for Padua, where they embarked on the Brenta for Venice. Here the scene was entirely changed; no vestiges of war, such as had deformed the plains of the Milanese, appeared; on the contrary, all was peace and elegance. The verdant banks of the Brenta exhibited a continued landscape of beauty, gaiety and splendour. Emily gazed with admiration on the villas of the Venetian *noblesse*, with their cool porticoes and colonnades, overhung with poplars and cypresses of majestic height and lively verdure; on their rich orangeries, whose blossoms perfumed the air; and on the luxuriant willows, that dipped their light leaves in the wave, and sheltered from the sun the gay parties whose music came at intervals on the breeze. The Carnival did, indeed, appear to

extend from Venice along the whole line of these enchanting shores; the river was gay with boats passing to that city, exhibiting the fantastic diversity of a masquerade in the dresses of the people within them; and towards evening, groups of dancers frequently were seen beneath the trees.

Cavigni meanwhile informed her of the names of the noblemen to whom the several villas they passed belonged, adding light sketches of their characters, such as served to amuse rather than to inform, exhibiting his own wit instead of the delineation of truth. Emily was sometimes diverted by his conversation; but his gaiety did not entertain Madame Montoni as it had formerly done; she was frequently grave, and Montoni retained his usual reserve.

Nothing could exceed Emily's admiration on her first view of Venice, with its islets, palaces, and towers rising out of the sea, whose clear surface reflected the tremulous picture in all its colours. The sun, sinking in the west, tinted the waves and the lofty mountains of Friuli, which skirt the northern shores of the Adriatic, with a saffron glow, while on the marble porticoes and colonnades of St. Mark were thrown the rich lights and shades of evening. As they glided on, the grander features of this city appeared more distinctly: its terraces, crowned with airy yet majestic fabrics, touched, as they now were, with the splendour of the setting sun, appeared as if they had been called up from the ocean by the wand of an enchanter, rather than reared by mortal hands.

The sun, soon after, sinking to the lower world, the shadow of the earth stole gradually over the waves, and then up the towering sides of the mountains of Friuli, till it extinguished even the last upward beams that had lingered on their summits, and the melancholy purple of evening drew over them like a thin veil. How deep, how beautiful was the tranquillity that wrapped the scene! All nature seemed to repose; the finest emotions of the soul were alone awake. Emily's eyes filled with tears of admiration and sublime devotion, as she raised them over the sleeping world to the vast heavens, and heard the notes of solemn music that stole over the waters from a distance. She listened in still rapture, and no person of the party broke the charm by an inquiry. The sounds seemed to grow on the air; for so smoothly did the barge glide along, that its motion was not perceivable and the fairy city appeared approaching to welcome the strangers. They now distinguished a female voice, accompanied by a few instruments, singing a soft and

mournful air, and its fine expression, as sometimes it seemed pleading with the impassioned tenderness of love, and then languishing into the cadence of hopeless grief, declared that it flowed from no feigned sensibility. "Ah!" thought Emily, as she sighed and remembered Valancourt, "those strains come from the heart!"

She looked round with anxious inquiry; the deep twilight that had fallen over the scene admitted only imperfect images to the eye, but at some distance on the sea she thought she perceived a gondola: a chorus of voices and instruments now swelled on the air—so sweet, so solemn! seemed like the hymn of angels descending through the silence of night! Now it died away, and fancy almost beheld the holy choir reascending towards heaven; then again it swelled with the breeze, trembled awhile, and again died into silence. It brought to Emily's recollection some lines of her late father, and she repeated in a low voice:

. . . Oft I hear,
Upon the silence of the midnight air,
Celestial voices swell in holy chorus,
That bears the soul to heaven!

The deep stillness that succeeded was as expressive as the strain that had just ceased. It was uninterrupted for several minutes, till a general sigh seemed to release the company from their enchantment. Emily, however, long indulged the pleasing sadness that had stolen upon her spirits; but the gay and busy scene that appeared, as the barge approached St. Mark's Place, at length roused her attention. The rising moon, which threw a shadowy light upon the terrace, and illumined the porticoes and magnificent arcades that crowned them, discovered the various company, whose light steps, soft guitars, and softer voices, echoed through the colonnades.

The music they heard before now passed Montoni's barge in one of the gondolas, of which several were seen skimming along the moonlight sea, full of gay parties, catching the cool breeze. Most of these had music, made sweeter by the waves over which it floated, and by the measured sounds of oars as they dashed the sparkling tide. Emily gazed, and listened, and thought herself in a fairy scene: even Madame Montoni was pleased; Montoni congratulated himself on his return to Venice, which he called the first city in the world, and Cavigni was more gay and animated than ever.

The barge passed on to the Grand Canal, where Montoni's mansion was situated. And here, other forms of beauty and

of grandeur, such as her imagination had never painted, were unfolded to Emily in the palaces of Sansovino and Palladio, as she glided along the waves. The air bore no sounds but those of sweetness, echoing along each margin of the canal, and from gondolas on its surface, while groups of masks were seen dancing on the moonlight terraces, and seemed almost to realize the romance of fairyland.

The barge stopped before the portico of a large house, from whence a servant of Montoni crossed the terrace, and immediately the party disembarked. From the portico they passed a noble hall to a staircase of marble, which led to a saloon fitted up in a style of magnificence that surprised Emily. The walls and ceilings were adorned with historical and allegorical paintings in fresco; silver tripods depending from chains of the same metal illumined the apartment, the floor of which was covered with Indian mats painted in a variety of colours and devices; the couches and drapery of the lattices were of pale green silk, embroidered and fringed with green and gold. Balcony lattices opened upon the Grand Canal, whence rose a confusion of voices and of musical instruments, and the breeze that gave freshness to the apartment. Emily, considering the gloomy temper of Montoni, looked upon the splendid furniture of his house with surprise, and remembered the report of his being a man of broken fortune with astonishment. "Ah!" said she to herself, "if Valancourt could but see this mansion, what peace would it give him! He would then be convinced that the report was groundless."

Madame Montoni seemed to assume the air of a princess; but Montoni was restless and discontented, and did not even observe the civility of bidding her welcome to her home.

Soon after his arrival, he ordered his gondola, and, with Cavigni, went out to mingle in the scenes of the evening. Madame then became serious and thoughtful. Emily who was charmed with everything she saw, endeavoured to enliven her; but reflection had not, with Madame Montoni, subdued caprice and ill-humour; and her answers discovered so much of both, that Emily gave up the attempt of diverting her, and withdrew to a lattice, to amuse herself with the scene without, so new and so enchanting.

The first object that attracted her notice was a group of dancers on the terrace below, led by a guitar and some other instruments. The girl who struck the guitar, and another who flourished the tambourine, passed on in a dancing step, and with

a light grace and gaiety of heart that would have subdued the Goddess of Spleen in her worst humour. After these came a group of fantastic figures, some dressed as *gondolieri*, others as minstrels, while others seemed to defy all description. They sung in parts, their voices accompanied by a few soft instruments. At a little distance from the portico they stopped, and Emily distinguished the verses of Ariosto. They sung of the wars of the Moors against Charlemagne, and then of the woes of Orlando: afterwards the measure changed, and the melancholy sweetness of Petrarch succeeded. The magic of his grief was assisted by all that Italian expression, heightened by the enchantments of Venetian moonlight, could give.

Emily, as she listened, caught the pensive enthusiasm; her tears flowed silently, while her fancy bore her far away to France and to Valancourt. Each succeeding sonnet, more full of charming sadness than the last, seemed to bind the spell of melancholy: with extreme regret she saw the musicians move on, and her attention followed the strain till the last faint warble died in air. She then remained sunk in that pensive tranquillity which soft music leaves on the mind—a state like that produced by the view of a beautiful landscape by moonlight, or by the recollection of scenes marked with the tenderness of friends lost for ever, and with sorrows which time has mellowed into mild regret. Such scenes are indeed, to the mind, like those faint traces which the memory bears of music that is past.

Other sounds soon awakened her attention: it was the solemn harmony of horns, that swelled from a distance: and observing the gondolas arrange themselves along the margin of the terraces, she threw on her veil, and, stepping into the balcony, discerned in the distant perspective of the canal something like a procession, floating on the light surface of the water; as it approached, the horns and other instruments mingled sweetly; and soon after, the fabled deities of the city seemed to have arisen from the ocean; for Neptune, with Venice personified as his queen, came on the undulating waves, surrounded by tritons and sea-nymphs. The fantastic splendour of this spectacle, together with the grandeur of the surrounding palaces, appeared like the vision of a poet suddenly embodied; and the fanciful images which it awakened in Emily's mind lingered there long after the procession had passed away. She indulged herself in imagining what might be the manners and delights of a sea-nymph, till she almost wished to throw off the habit of mortality, and plunge into the green wave to participate them.

"How delightful," said she, "to live amidst the coral bowers and crystal caverns of the ocean, with my sister nymphs, and listen to the sounding waters above, and to the soft shells of the tritons! and then, after sunset, to skim on the surface of the waves, round wild rocks, and along sequestered shores, where perhaps some pensive wanderer comes to weep! Then would I soothe his sorrows with my sweet music, and offer him from a shell some of the delicious fruit that hangs round Neptune's palace."

She was recalled from her reverie to a mere mortal supper, and could not forbear smiling at the fancies she had been indulging, and at her conviction of the serious displeasure which Madame Montoni would have expressed, could she have been made acquainted with them.

After supper, her aunt sat late; but Montoni did not return, and she at length retired to rest. If Emily had admired the magnificence of the saloon, she was not less surprised on observing the half-furnished and forlorn appearance of the apartments she passed in the way to her chamber, whither she went through long suites of noble rooms, that seemed, from their desolate aspect, to have been unoccupied for many years. On the walls of some were the faded remains of tapestry; from others, painted in fresco, the damps had almost withdrawn both colour and design. At length she reached her own chamber, spacious, desolate, and lofty, like the rest, with high lattices that opened towards the Adriatic. It brought gloomy images to her mind; but the view of the Adriatic soon gave her others more airy, among which was that of the sea-nymph, whose delights she had before amused herself with picturing; and anxious to escape from serious reflections, she now endeavoured to throw her fanciful ideas into a train, and concluded the hour with composing the following lines:

THE SEA-NYMPH

Down, down a thousand fathom deep,
Among the sounding seas I go;
Play round the foot of every steep
Whose cliffs above the ocean grow.

There, within their secret caves,
I hear the mighty rivers roar!
And guide their streams through Neptune's waves,
To bless the green earth's inmost shore:

And bid the freshen'd waters glide,
For fern-crown'd nymphs, of lake or brook,

Through winding woods and pastures wide,
And many a wild, romantic nook.

For this the nymphs at fall of eve
Oft dance upon the flowery banks,
And sing my name, and garlands weave
To bear beneath the wave their thanks.

In coral bowers I love to lie,
And hear the surges roll above,
And through the waters view on high
The proud ships sail, and gay clouds move.

And oft at midnight's stillest hour,
When summer seas the vessel lave,
I love to prove my charming power
While floating on the moonlight wave.

And when deep sleep the crew has bound,
And the sad lover musing leans
O'er the ship's side, I breathe around
Such strains as speak no mortal means!

O'er the dim waves his searching eye
Sees but the vessel's lengthened shade;
Above—the moon and azure sky;
Entranced he hears and half afraid!

Sometimes a single note I swell,
That, softly sweet, at distance dies!
Then wake the magic of my shell,
And choral voices round me rise!

The trembling youth, charm'd by my strain,
Calls up the crew, who, silent, bend
O'er the high deck, but list in vain;
My song is hush'd, my wonders end!

Within the mountain's woody bay,
Where the tall bark at anchor rides,
At twilight hour, with tritons gay
I dance upon the lapsing tides!

And with my sister-nymphs I sport,
Till the broad sun looks o'er the floods;
Then swift we seek our crystal court,
Deep in the wave, 'mid Neptune's woods.

In cool arcades and glassy halls
We pass the sultry hours of noon,
Beyond wherever sunbeam falls,
Weaving sea-flowers in gay festoon.

The while we chant our ditties sweet
 To some soft shell that warbles near;
 Join'd by the murmuring currents, fleet,
 That glide along our halls so clear.

There the pale pearl and sapphire blue,
 And ruby red, and emerald green,
 Dart from the domes a changing hue,
 And sparry columns deck the scene.

When the dark storm scowls o'er the deep,
 And long, long peals of thunder sound,
 On some high cliff my watch I keep
 O'er all the restless seas around:

Till on the ridgy wave afar
 Comes the lone vessel, labouring slow,
 Spreading the white foam in the air,
 With sail and topmast bending low.

Then, plunge I 'mid the ocean's roar,
 My way by quivering lightnings shown,
 To guide the bark to peaceful shore,
 And hush the sailor's fearful groan.

And if too late I reach its side
 To save it from the 'whelming surge,
 I call my dolphins o'er the tide,
 To bear the crew where isles emerge.

Their mournful spirits soon I cheer,
 While round the desert coast I go,
 With warbled songs they faintly hear,
 Oft as the stormy gust sinks low.

My music leads to lofty groves,
 That wild upon the sea-bank wave;
 Where sweet fruits bloom, and fresh spring roves,
 And closing boughs the tempest brave.

Then, from the air spirits obey,
 My potent voice they love so well,
 And on the clouds paint visions gay,
 While strains more sweet at distance swell.

And thus the lonely hours I cheat,
 Soothing the shipwreck'd sailor's heart,
 Till from the waves the storms retreat,
 And o'er the east the day-beams dart.

Neptune for this oft binds me fast
 To rocks below, with coral chain,
 Till all the tempest's overpast.
 And drowning seamen cry in vain.

Whoe'er ye are that love my lay,
 Come when red sunset tints the wave,
 To the still sands where fairies play;
 There, in cool seas, I love to lave.

CHAPTER XVI

He is a great observer, and he looks
 Quite through the deeds of men; he loves no plays,
 . . . he hears no music;
 Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
 As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
 That could be moved to smile at anything.
 Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
 When they behold a greater than themselves.

Julius Cæsar.

MONTONI and his companions did not return home till many hours after the dawn had blushed upon the Adriatic. The airy groups which had danced all night along the colonnade of St. Mark, dispersed before the morning like so many spirits. Montoni had been otherwise engaged; his soul was little susceptible of light pleasures. He delighted in the energies of the passions; the difficulties and tempests of life, which wreck the happiness of others, roused and strengthened all the powers of his mind, and afforded him the highest enjoyments of which his nature was capable. Without some object of strong interest, life was to him little more than a sleep; and when pursuits of real interest failed, he substituted artificial ones, till habit changed their nature, and they ceased to be unreal. Of this kind was the habit of gaming which he had adopted, first, for the purpose of relieving him from the languor of inaction, but had since pursued with the ardour of passion. In this occupation he had passed the night with Cavigni, and a party of young men who had more money than rank and more vice than either. Montoni despised the greater part of these for the inferiority of their talents rather than for their vicious inclinations, and associated with them only to make them the instruments of his purposes.

Among these, however, were some of superior abilities, and a few whom Montoni admitted to his intimacy; but even towards these he still preserved a decisive and haughty air, which, while it imposed submission on weak and timid minds, roused the fierce hatred of strong ones. He had, of course, many and bitter enemies; but the rancour of their hatred proved the degree of his power; and as power was his chief aim, he gloried more in such hatred than it was possible he could in being esteemed. A feeling so tempered as that of esteem, he despised, and would have despised himself also had he thought himself capable of being flattered by it.

Among the few whom he distinguished were the Signors Bertolini, Orsino, and Verezzi. The first was a man of gay temper, strong passions, dissipated and of unbounded extravagance, but generous, brave, and unsuspecting. Orsino was reserved and haughty; loving power more than ostentation; of a cruel and suspicious temper; quick to feel an injury, and relentless in avenging it; cunning and unsearchable in contrivance, patient and indefatigable in the execution of his schemes. He had a perfect command of feature and of his passions, of which he had scarcely any but pride, revenge, and avarice; and in the gratification of these, few considerations had power to restrain him, few obstacles to withstand the depth of his stratagems. This man was the chief favourite of Montoni. Verezzi was a man of some talent, of fiery imagination, and the slave of alternate passions. He was gay, voluptuous, and daring, yet had neither perseverance nor true courage, and was meanly selfish in all his aims. Quick to form schemes, and sanguine in his hope of success, he was the first to undertake, and to abandon, not only his own plans, but those adopted from other persons. Proud and impetuous, he revolted against all subordination; yet those who were acquainted with his character, and watched the turn of his passions, could lead him like a child.

Such were the friends whom Montoni introduced to his family and his table, on the day after his arrival at Venice. There were also of the party a Venetian nobleman, Count Morano, and a Signora Livona, whom Montoni had introduced to his wife as a lady of distinguished merit, and who, having called in the morning to welcome her to Venice, had been requested to be of the dinner party.

Madame Montoni received with a very ill grace the compliments of the signors. She disliked them, because they were the friends

of her husband; hated them, because she believed they had contributed to detain him abroad till so late an hour of the preceding morning; and envied them, since, conscious of her own want of influence, she was convinced that he preferred their society to her own. The rank of Count Morano procured him that distinction which she refused to the rest of the company. The haughty sullenness of her countenance and manner, and the ostentatious extravagance of her dress, for she had not yet adopted the Venetian habit, were strikingly contrasted by the beauty, modesty, sweetness, and simplicity of Emily, who observed with more attention than pleasure the party around her. The beauty and fascinating manners of Signora Livona, however, won her involuntary regard; while the sweetness of her accents, and her air of gentle kindness, awakened with Emily those pleasing affections which so long had slumbered.

In the cool of the evening the party embarked in Montoni's gondola, and rowed out upon the sea. The red glow of sunset still touched the waves, and lingered in the west, where the melancholy gleam seemed slowly expiring while the dark blue of the upper ether began to twinkle with stars. Emily sat, given up to pensive and sweet emotions. The smoothness of the water over which she glided, its reflected images—a new heaven and trembling stars below the waves, with shadowy outlines of towers and porticoes—conspired with the stillness of the hour, interrupted only by the passing wave or the notes of distant music, to raise those emotions to enthusiasm. As she listened to the measured sound of the oars, and to the remote warblings that came in the breeze, her softened mind returned to the memory of St. Aubert and to Valancourt, and tears stole to her eyes. The rays of the moon, strengthening as the shadows deepened, soon after threw a silvery gleam upon her countenance, which was partly shaded by a thick black veil, and touched it with inimitable softness. Hers was the contour of a Madonna, with the sensibility of a Magdalen; and the pensive uplifted eye, with the tear that glittered on her cheek, confirmed the expression of the character.

The last strain of distant music now died in air, for the gondola was far upon the waves, and the party determined to have music of their own. The Count Morano, who sat next to Emily and who had been observing her for some time in silence, snatched up a lute, and struck the chords with the finger of harmony herself, while his voice, a fine tenor, accompanied them in a rondeau full of tender sadness. To him, indeed, might

have been applied that beautiful exhortation of an English poet, had it then existed:

. . . Strike up, my master,
But touch the strings with religious softness!
Teach sounds to languish through the night's dull ear
Till Melancholy starts from off her couch,
And Carelessness grows convert to Attention.

With such powers of expression the count sung the following:

RONDEAU

Soft as yon silver ray, that sleeps
Upon the ocean's trembling tide;
Soft as the air, that lightly sweeps
Yon sail, that swells in stately pride:

Soft as the surge's stealing note,
That dies along the distant shores,
Or warbled strain, that sinks remote—
So soft the sigh my bosom pours!

True as the wave to Cynthia's ray,
True as the vessel to the breeze,
True as the soul to music's sway,
Or music to Venetian seas:

Soft as yon silver beams, that sleep
Upon the ocean's trembling breast;
So soft, so true, fond Love shall weep,
So soft, so true, with *thee* shall rest.

The cadence with which he returned from the last stanza to a repetition of the first; the fine modulation in which his voice stole upon the first line, and the pathetic energy with which it pronounced the last, were such as only exquisite taste could give. When he had concluded, he gave the lute with a sigh to Emily, who, to avoid any appearance of affectation, immediately began to play. She sung a melancholy little air, one of the popular songs of her native province, with a simplicity and pathos that made it enchanting. But its well-known melody brought so forcibly to her fancy the scenes and the persons among which she had often heard it, that her spirits were overcome, her voice trembled and ceased—and the strings of the lute were struck with a disordered hand; till, ashamed of the emotion she had betrayed, she suddenly passed on to a song so gay and airy, that the steps of the dance seemed almost to echo to the notes. "*Bravissimo!*" burst instantly from the lips of her

delighted auditors, and she was compelled to repeat the air. Among the compliments that followed, those of the count were not the least audible; and they had not concluded when Emily gave the instrument to Signora Livona, whose voice accompanied it with true Italian taste.

Afterwards, the count, Emily, Cavigni, and the signora sung *canzonettes*, accompanied by a couple of lutes and a few other instruments. Sometimes the instruments suddenly ceased, and the voices dropped from the full swell of harmony into a low chant; then, after a deep pause, they rose by degrees, the instruments one by one striking up, till the loud and full chorus soared again to heaven.

Meanwhile Montoni, who was weary of this harmony, was considering how he might disengage himself from his party, or withdraw with such of it as would be willing to play, to a casino. In a pause of the music he proposed returning to shore; a proposal which Orsino eagerly seconded, but which the count and the other gentlemen as warmly opposed.

Montoni still meditated how he might excuse himself from longer attendance upon the count, for to him only he thought excuse necessary, and how he might get to land, till the *gondolieri* of an empty boat returning to Venice hailed his people. Without troubling himself longer about an excuse, he seized this opportunity of going thither; and committing the ladies to the care of his friends, departed with Orsino, while Emily, for the first time, saw him go with regret: for she considered his presence a protection, though she knew not what she should fear. He landed at St. Mark's, and hurrying to a casino, was soon lost amidst a crowd of gamesters.

Meanwhile the count having secretly dispatched a servant in Montoni's boat for his own gondola and musicians, Emily heard, without knowing his project, the gay song of *gondolieri* approaching, as they sat on the stern of the boat, and saw the tremulous gleam of the moonlight wave, which their oars disturbed. Presently she heard the sound of instruments, and then a full symphony swelled on the air; and the boats meeting, the *gondolieri* hailed each other. The count then explaining himself, the party removed into his gondola, which was embellished with all that taste could bestow.

While they partook of a collation of fruits and ice, the whole band, following at a distance in the other boat, played the most sweet and enchanting strains; and the count, who had again seated himself by Emily, paid her unremitted attention; and

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delighted auditors, and she was compelled to repeat the air. Among the compliments that followed, those of the count were not the least audible; and they had not concluded when Emily gave the instrument to Signora Livona, whose voice accompanied it with true Italian taste.

Afterwards, the count, Emily, Cavigni, and the signora sung *canzonettes*, accompanied by a couple of lutes and a few other instruments. Sometimes the instruments suddenly ceased, and the voices dropped from the full swell of harmony into a low chant; then, after a deep pause, they rose by degrees, the instruments one by one striking up, till the loud and full chorus soared again to heaven.

Meanwhile Montoni, who was weary of this harmony, was considering how he might disengage himself from his party, or withdraw with such of it as would be willing to play, to a casino. In a pause of the music he proposed returning to shore; a proposal which Orsino eagerly seconded, but which the count and the other gentlemen as warmly opposed.

Montoni still meditated how he might excuse himself from longer attendance upon the count, for to him only he thought excuse necessary, and how he might get to land, till the *gondolieri* of an empty boat returning to Venice hailed his people. Without troubling himself longer about an excuse, he seized this opportunity of going thither; and committing the ladies to the care of his friends, departed with Orsino, while Emily, for the first time, saw him go with regret: for she considered his presence a protection, though she knew not what she should fear. He landed at St. Mark's, and hurrying to a casino, was soon lost amidst a crowd of gamesters.

Meanwhile the count having secretly dispatched a servant in Montoni's boat for his own gondola and musicians, Emily heard, without knowing his project, the gay song of *gondolieri* approaching, as they sat on the stern of the boat, and saw the tremulous gleam of the moonlight wave, which their oars disturbed. Presently she heard the sound of instruments, and then a full symphony swelled on the air; and the boats meeting, the *gondolieri* hailed each other. The count then explaining himself, the party removed into his gondola, which was embellished with all that taste could bestow.

While they partook of a collation of fruits and ice, the whole band, following at a distance in the other boat, played the most sweet and enchanting strains; and the count, who had again seated himself by Emily, paid her unremitted attention; and

sometimes, in a low but impassioned voice, uttered compliments she could not misunderstand. To avoid them she conversed with Signora Livona, and her manner to the count assumed a mild reserve, which, though dignified, was too gentle to repress his assiduities; he could see, hear, speak to no person but Emily; while Cavigni observed him now and then with a look of displeasure, and Emily, with one of uneasiness. She now wished for nothing so much as to return to Venice: but it was near mid night before the gondolas approached St. Mark's Place, where the voice of gaiety and song was loud. The busy hum of mingling sounds was heard at a considerable distance on the water; and had not a bright moonlight discovered the city, with its terraces and towers, a stranger would almost have credited the fabled wonders of Neptune's court, and believed that the tumult arose from beneath the waves.

They landed at St. Mark's, where the gaiety of the colonnades and the beauty of the night made Madame Montoni willingly submit to the count's solicitations to join the promenade, and afterwards to take a supper with the rest of the party at his casino. If anything could have dissipated Emily's uneasiness, it would have been the grandeur, gaiety, and novelty of the surrounding scene, adorned with Palladio's palaces, and busy with parties of masqueraders.

At length they withdrew to the casino, which was fitted up with infinite taste, and where a splendid banquet was prepared. But here Emily's reserve made the count perceive that it was necessary for his interest to win the favour of Madame Montoni, which, from the condescension she had already shown to him, appeared to be an achievement of no great difficulty. He transferred, therefore, part of his attention from Emily to her aunt, who felt too much flattered by the distinction even to disguise her emotion; and before the party broke up, he had entirely engaged the esteem of Madame Montoni. Whenever he addressed her, her ungracious countenance relaxed into smiles, and to whatever he proposed she assented. He invited her with the rest of the party to take coffee in his box at the opera on the following evening, and Emily heard the invitation accepted, with strong anxiety concerning the means of excusing herself from attending Madame Montoni thither.

It was very late before their gondola was ordered; and Emily's surprise was extreme, when, on quitting the casino, she beheld the broad sun rising out of the Adriatic, while St. Mark's Place was yet crowded with company. Sleep had long weighed heavily

on her eyes; but now the fresh sea breeze revived her, and she would have quitted the scene with regret, had not the count been present, performing the duty which he had imposed upon himself, of escorting them home. There they heard that Montoni was not yet returned; and his wife, retiring in displeasure to her apartment, at length released Emily from the fatigue of further attendance.

Montoni came home late in the morning, in a very ill humour, having lost considerably at play; and before he withdrew to rest had a private conference with Cavigni, whose manner on the following day seemed to tell that the subject of it had not been pleasing to him,

In the evening Madame Montoni, who during the day had observed a sullen silence towards her husband, received visits from some Venetian ladies, with whose sweet manners Emily was particularly charmed. They had an air of ease and kindness towards the strangers, as if they had been their familiar friends for years; and their conversation was by turns tender, sentimental, and gay. Madame, though she had no taste for such conversation, and whose coarseness and selfishness sometimes exhibited a ludicrous contrast to their excessive refinement, could not remain wholly insensible to the captivations of their manner.

In a pause of conversation, a lady who was called Signora Herminia took up a lute, and began to play and sing with as much easy gaiety as if she had been alone. Her voice was uncommonly rich in tone and various in expression; yet she appeared to be entirely unconscious of its powers, and meant nothing less than to display them. She sung from the gaiety of her heart, as she sat with her veil half thrown back, holding gracefully the lute, under the spreading foliage and flowers of some plants that rose from baskets and interlaced one of the lattices of the saloon. Emily, retiring a little from the company, sketched her figure, with the miniature scenery around her, and drew a very interesting picture, which, though it would not perhaps have borne criticism, had spirit and taste enough to awaken both the fancy and the heart. When she had finished it, she presented it to the beautiful original, who was delighted with the offering, as well as the sentiment it conveyed, and assured Emily, with a smile of captivating sweetness, that she should preserve it as a pledge of her friendship.

In the evening Cavigni joined the ladies, but Montoni had other engagements; and they embarked in the gondola for St. Mark's, where the same gay company seemed to flutter as on the

preceding night. The cool breeze, the glassy sea, the gentle sound of its waves, and the sweeter murmur of distant music; the lofty porticoes and arcades, and the happy groups that sauntered beneath them; these, with every feature and circumstance of the scene, united to charm Emily, no longer teased by the officious attentions of Count Morano. But as she looked upon the moonlight sea undulating along the walls of St. Mark, and, lingering for a moment over those walls, caught the sweet and melancholy song of some gondolier as he sat in his boat below waiting for his master, her softened mind returned to the memory of her home, of her friends, and of all that was dear in her native country.

After walking some time, they sat down at the door of a casino: and while Cavigni was accommodating them with coffee and ice, were joined by Count Morano. He sought Emily with a look of impatient delight, who, remembering all the attention he had shown her on the preceding evening, was compelled, as before, to shrink from his assiduities into a timid reserve, except when she conversed with Signora Herminia and the other ladies of her party.

It was near midnight before they withdrew to the opera, where Emily was not so charmed but that, when she remembered the scene she had just quitted, she felt how infinitely inferior all the splendour of art is to the sublimity of nature. Her heart was not now affected, tears of admiration did not start to her eyes, as when she viewed the vast expanse of ocean, the grandeur of the heavens, and listened to the rolling waters, and to the faint music that at intervals mingled with their roar. Remembering these, the scene before her faded into insignificance.

Of the evening, which passed on without any particular incident, she wished the conclusion, that she might escape from the attentions of the count; and as opposite qualities frequently attract each other in our thoughts, thus Emily, when she looked on Count Morano, remembered Valancourt, and a sigh sometimes followed the recollection.

Several weeks passed in the course of customary visits, during which nothing remarkable occurred. Emily was amused by the manners and scenes that surrounded her, so different from those of France, but where Count Morano, too frequently for her comfort, contrived to introduce himself. His manner, figure, and accomplishments, which were generally admired, Emily would perhaps have admired also, had her heart been disengaged from Valancourt, and had the count forborne to persecute her with

officious attentions, during which she observed some traits in his character that prejudiced her against whatever might otherwise be good in it.

Soon after his arrival at Venice, Montoni received a packet from M. Quesnel, in which the latter mentioned the death of his wife's uncle, at his villa on the Brenta; and that, in consequence of this event, he should hasten to take possession of that estate and of other effects bequeathed to him. This uncle was the brother of Madame Quesnel's late mother; Montoni was related to her by the father's side; and though he could have had neither claim nor expectation concerning these possessions, he could scarcely conceal the envy which M. Quesnel's letter excited.

Emily had observed with concern, that, since they left France, Montoni had not even affected kindness towards her aunt, and that, after treating her at first with neglect, he now met her with uniform ill-humour and reserve. She had never supposed that her aunt's foibles could have escaped the discernment of Montoni, or that her mind or figure were of a kind to deserve his attention. Her surprise, therefore, at this match had been extreme; but since he had made the choice, she did not suspect that he would so openly have discovered his contempt of it. But Montoni, who had been allured by the seeming wealth of Madame Cheron, was now severely disappointed by her comparative poverty, and highly exasperated by the deceit she had employed to conceal it, till concealment was no longer necessary. He had been deceived in an affair wherein he meant to be the deceiver; outwitted by the superior cunning of a woman whose understanding he despised, and to whom he had sacrificed his pride and his liberty, without saving himself from the ruin which had impended over his head. Madame Montoni had contrived to have the greatest part of what she really did possess settled upon herself: what remained, though it was totally inadequate both to her husband's expectations and to his necessities, he had converted into money, and brought with him to Venice, that he might a little longer delude society, and make a last effort to regain the fortunes he had lost.

The hints which had been thrown out to Valancourt concerning Montoni's character and condition were too true; but it was now left to time and occasion to unfold the circumstances both of what had, and of what had not been hinted,—and to time and occasion we commit them.

Madame Montoni was not of a nature to bear injuries with meekness, or to resent them with dignity: her exasperated pride

displayed itself in all the violence and acrimony of a little, or at least of an ill-regulated, mind. She would not acknowledge, even to herself, that she had in any degree provoked contempt by her duplicity; but weakly persisted in believing that she alone was to be pitied, and Montoni alone to be censured: for, as her mind had naturally little perception of moral obligation, she seldom understood its force but when it happened to be violated against herself: her vanity had already been severely shocked by a discovery of Montoni's contempt: it remained to be further proved by a discovery of his circumstances. His mansion at Venice, though its furniture discovered a part of the truth to unprejudiced persons, told nothing to those who were blinded by a resolution to believe whatever they wished. Madame Montoni still thought herself little less than a princess, possessing a palace at Venice, and a castle among the Apennines. To the Castle di Udolpho, indeed, Montoni sometimes talked of going for a few weeks, to examine into its condition, and to receive some rents; for it appeared that he had not been there for two years, and that during this period it had been inhabited only by an old servant, whom he called his steward.

Emily listened to the mention of this journey with pleasure; for she not only expected from it new ideas, but a release from the persevering assiduities of Count Morano. In the country, too, she would have leisure to think of Valancourt, and to indulge the melancholy which his image, and a recollection of the scenes of La Vallée, always blessed with the memory of her parents, awakened. The ideal scenes were dearer and more soothing to her heart than all the splendour of gay assemblies; they were a kind of talisman that expelled the poison of temporary evils, and supported her hopes of happy days: they appeared like a beautiful landscape lighted up by a gleam of sunshine, and seen through a perspective of dark and rugged rocks.

But Count Morano did not long confine himself to silent assiduities; he declared his passion to Emily, and made proposals to Montoni, who encouraged, though Emily rejected him: with Montoni for his friend, and an abundance of vanity to delude him, he did not despair of success. Emily was astonished and highly disgusted at his perseverance, after she had explained her sentiments with a frankness that would not allow him to misunderstand them.

He now passed the greater part of his time at Montoni's, dining there almost daily, and attending madame and Emily wherever they went; and all this notwithstanding the uniform reserve

of Emily, whose aunt seemed as anxious as Montoni to promote this marriage, and would never dispense with her attendance at any assembly where the count proposed to be present.

Montoni now said nothing of his intended journey, of which Emily waited impatiently to hear; and he was seldom at home but when the count or Signor Orsino was there, for between himself and Cavigni a coolness seemed to subsist, though the latter remained in his house. With Orsino, Montoni was frequently closeted for hours together; and whatever might be the business upon which they consulted, it appeared to be of consequence, since Montoni often sacrificed to it his favourite passion for play, and remained at home the whole night. There was somewhat of privacy, too, in the manner of Orsino's visits, which had never before occurred, and which excited not only surprise, but some degree of alarm in Emily's mind, who had unwillingly discovered much of his character when he had most endeavoured to disguise it. After these visits, Montoni was often more thoughtful than usual: sometimes the deep workings of his mind entirely abstracted him from surrounding objects, and threw a gloom over his visage that rendered it terrible; at others, his eyes seemed almost to flash fire, and all the energies of his soul appeared to be roused for some great enterprise. Emily observed these written characters of his thoughts with deep interest and not without some degree of awe, when she considered that she was entirely in his power; but forbore even to hint her fears, or her observations, to Madame Montoni, who discerned nothing in her husband, at these times, but his usual sternness.

A second letter from M. Quesnel announced the arrival of himself and his lady at the Villa Miarenti; stated several circumstances of his good fortune respecting the affair that had brought him into Italy; and concluded with an earnest request to see Montoni, his wife and niece, at his new estate.

Emily received about the same period a much more interesting letter, and which soothed for a while every anxiety of her heart. Valancourt, hoping she might be still at Venice, had trusted a letter to the ordinary post, that told of his health, and of his unceasing and anxious affection. He had lingered at Toulouse for some time after her departure, that he might indulge the melancholy pleasure of wandering through the scenes where he had been accustomed to behold her, and had thence gone to his brother's château, which was in the neighbourhood of La Vallée. Having mentioned this, he added, "If the duty of attending my

regiment did not require my departure, I know not when I should have resolution enough to quit the neighbourhood of a place which is endeared by the remembrance of you. The vicinity to La Vallée has alone detained me thus long at Estuvière: I frequently ride thither early in the morning, that I may wander, at leisure through the day among scenes which were once your home, where I have been accustomed to see you and hear you converse. I have renewed my acquaintance with the good old Theresa, who rejoiced to see me, that she might talk of you: I need not say how much this circumstance attached me to her, or how eagerly I listened to her upon her favourite subject. You will guess the motive that first induced me to make myself known to Theresa: it was, indeed, no other than that of gaining admittance into the château and gardens which my Emily had so lately inhabited; here, then, I wander, and meet your image under every shade: but chiefly I love to sit beneath the spreading branches of your favourite plane, where once, Emily, we sat together; where I first ventured to tell you that I loved. O Emily! the remembrance of those moments overcomes me—I sit lost in reverie—I endeavour to see you dimly through my tears, in all the heaven of peace and innocence, such as you then appeared to me; to hear again the accents of that voice, which then thrilled my heart with tenderness and hope. I lean on the wall of the terrace where we together watched the rapid current of the Garonne below, while I described the wild scenery about its source, but thought only of you. O Emily! are these moments passed for ever—will they nevermore return?"

In another part of his letter he wrote thus: "You see my letter is dated on many different days, and, if you look back to the first, you will perceive that I began to write soon after your departure from France. To write was indeed the only employment that withdrew me from my own melancholy, and rendered your absence supportable, or rather it seemed to destroy absence; for, when I was conversing with you on paper, and telling you every sentiment and affection of my heart, you almost appeared to be present. This employment has been from time to time my chief consolation, and I have deferred sending off my packet, merely for the comfort of prolonging it, though it was certain that what I had written, was written to no purpose till you received it. Whenever my mind has been more than usually depressed, I have come to pour forth its sorrows to you, and have always found consolation; and when any little occurrence has interested my heart, and given a gleam of joy to my

spirits, I have hastened to communicate it to you, and have received reflected satisfaction. Thus my letter is a kind of picture of my life and of my thoughts for the last month; and thus, though it has been deeply interesting to me while I wrote it, and I dare hope will, for the same reason, be not indifferent to you, yet to other readers it would seem to abound only in frivolities. Thus it is always when we attempt to describe the finer movements of the heart; for they are too fine to be discerned, they can only be experienced, and are therefore passed over by the indifferent observer, while the interested one feels that all description is imperfect and unnecessary, except as it may prove the sincerity of the writer, and soothe his own sufferings. You will pardon all this egotism—for I am a lover.

"I have just heard of a circumstance which entirely destroys all my fairy paradise of ideal delight, and which will reconcile me to the necessity of returning to my regiment; for I must no longer wander beneath the beloved shades where I have been accustomed to meet you in thought.—La Vallée is let; I have reason to believe this is without your knowledge, from what Theresa told me this morning, and therefore I mention the circumstance.—She shed tears while she related that she was going to leave the service of her dear mistress, and the château where she had lived so many happy years; 'and all this,' added she, 'without even a letter from mademoiselle to soften the news; but it is all M. Quesnel's doings, and I dare say she does not even know what is going forward.'

"Theresa added, that she had received a letter from him, informing her the château was let; and that as her service would no longer be required, she must quit the place on that day week, when the new tenant would arrive.

"Theresa had been surprised by a visit from M. Quesnel, some time before the receipt of this letter, who was accompanied by a stranger that viewed the premises with much curiosity."

Towards the conclusion of this letter, which is dated a week after this sentence, Valancourt adds, "I have received a summons from my regiment, and I join it without regret, since I am shut out from the scenes that are so interesting to my heart. I rode to La Vallée this morning, and heard that the new tenant was arrived, and that Theresa was gone. I should not treat the subject thus familiarly if I did not believe you to be uninformed of this disposal of your house; for your satisfaction I have endeavoured to learn something of the character and fortune

of your tenant, but without success. He is a gentleman, they say, and this is all I can hear. The place as I wandered round the boundaries appeared more melancholy to my imagination than I had ever seen it. I wished earnestly to have got admittance, that I might have taken another leave of your favourite plane-tree, and thought of you once more beneath its shade; but I forbore to tempt the curiosity of strangers; the fishing-house in the woods, however, was still open to me; thither I went, and passed an hour, which I cannot even look back upon without emotion. O Emily! surely we are not separated for ever—surely we shall live for each other!”

This letter brought many tears to Emily's eyes; tears of tenderness and satisfaction on learning that Valancourt was well, and that time and absence had in no degree effaced her image from his heart. There were passages in this letter which particularly affected her, such as those describing his visits to La Vallée, and the sentiments of delicate affection that its scenes had awakened. It was a considerable time before her mind was sufficiently abstracted from Valancourt to feel the force of his intelligence concerning La Vallée. That M. Quesnel should let it, without even consulting her on the measure, both surprised and shocked her; particularly as it proved the absolute authority he thought himself entitled to exercise in her affairs. It is true he had proposed before she left France that the château should be let during her absence, and to the economical prudence of this she had nothing to object; but the committing what had been her father's villa to the power and caprice of strangers, and the depriving herself of a sure home, should any unhappy circumstance make her look back to her home as an asylum, were considerations that made her, even then, strongly oppose the measure. Her father, too, in his last hour, had received from her a solemn promise never to dispose of La Vallée; and this she considered as in some degree violated if she suffered the place to be let. But it was now evident with how little respect M. Quesnel had regarded these objections, and how insignificant he considered every obstacle to pecuniary advantage. It appeared also, that he had not even condescended to inform Montoni of the step he had taken, since no motive was evident for Montoni's concealing the circumstance from her, if it had been made known to him: this both displeased and surprised her; but the chief subjects of her uneasiness were—the temporary disposal of La Vallée and the dismissal of her father's old and faithful servant.—“Poor Theresa,” said Emily, “thou hadst not saved

much in thy servitude, for thou wast always tender towards the poor, and believedst thou shouldst die in the family, where thy best years had been spent. Poor Theresa!—now art thou turned out in thy old age to seek thy bread!”

Emily wept bitterly as these thoughts passed over her mind, and she determined to consider what could be done for Theresa, and to talk very explicitly to M. Quesnel on the subject; but she much feared that his cold heart could feel only for itself. She determined also to inquire whether he had made any mention of her affairs in his letter to Montoni, who soon gave her the opportunity she sought, by desiring that she would attend him in his study. She had little doubt that the interview was intended for the purpose of communicating to her a part of M. Quesnel's letter concerning the transactions of La Vallée, and she obeyed him immediately. Montoni was alone.

“I have just been writing to M. Quesnel,” said he, when Emily appeared, “in reply to the letter I received from him a few days ago, and I wished to talk to you upon a subject that occupied part of it.”

“I also wished to speak with you on this topic, sir,” said Emily.

“It is a subject of some interest to you, undoubtedly,” rejoined Montoni, “and I think, you must see it in the light that I do; indeed it will not bear any other. I trust you will agree with me, that any objection founded on sentiment, as they call it, ought to yield to circumstances of solid advantage.”

“Granting this, sir,” replied Emily modestly, “those of humanity ought surely to be attended to. But I fear it is now too late to deliberate upon this plan, and I must regret that it is no longer in my power to reject it.”

“It is too late,” said Montoni; “but since it is so, I am pleased to observe that you submit to reason and necessity without indulging useless complaint. I applaud this conduct exceedingly, the more, perhaps, since it discovers a strength of mind seldom observable in your sex. When you are older, you will look back with gratitude to the friends who assisted in rescuing you from the romantic illusions of sentiment, and will perceive that they are only the snares of childhood, and should be vanquished the moment you escape from the nursery. I have not closed my letter, and you may add a few lines to inform your uncle of your acquiescence. You will soon see him, for it is my intention to take you, with Madame Montoni, in a few days, to Miarenti, and you can then talk over the affair.”

Emily wrote on the opposite side of the paper as follows:

It is now useless, sir, for me to remonstrate upon the circumstances of which Signor Montoni informs me that he has written. I could have wished, at least, that the affair had been concluded with less precipitation, that I might have taught myself to subdue some prejudices, as the signor calls them, which still linger in my heart. As it is, I submit. In point of prudence, nothing certainly can be objected; but, though I submit, I have yet much to say on some other points of the subject, when I shall have the honour of seeing you. In the meantime I entreat you to take care of Theresa, for the sake of,

Sir,
Your affectionate niece,
EMILY ST. AUBERT.

Montoni smiled satirically at what Emily had written, but did not object to it; and she withdrew to her own apartment, where she sat down to begin a letter to Valancourt, in which she related the particulars of her journey, and her arrival at Venice, described some of the most striking scenes in the passage over the Alps: her emotions on her first view of Italy; the manners and characters of the people around her, and some few circumstances of Montoni's conduct. But she avoided even naming Count Morano, much more the declaration he had made, since she well knew how tremblingly alive to fear is real love, how jealously watchful of every circumstance that may affect its interest; and she scrupulously avoided to give Valancourt even the slightest reason for believing he had a rival.

On the following day Count Morano dined again at Montoni's. He was in an uncommon flow of spirits, and Emily thought there was somewhat of exultation in his manner of addressing her, which she had never observed before. She endeavoured to repress this by more than her usual reserve, but the cold civility of her air now seemed rather to encourage than depress him. He appeared watchful of an opportunity of speaking with her alone, and more than once solicited this; but Emily always replied, that she could hear nothing from him which he would be unwilling to repeat before the whole company.

In the evening Madame Montoni and her party went out upon the sea, and as the count led Emily to his *zendaletto*, he carried her hand to his lips, and thanked her for the condescension she had shown him. Emily, in extreme surprise and displeasure, hastily withdrew her hand, and concluded that he had spoken ironically; but on reaching the steps of the terrace, and observing by the livery that it was the count's *zendaletto* which waited

below, while the rest of the party, having arranged themselves in the gondolas, were moving on, she determined not to permit a separate conversation, and wishing him a good evening, returned to the portico. The count followed to expostulate and entreat; and Montoni, who then came out, rendered solicitation unnecessary, for without condescending to speak, he took her hand, and led her to the *zendaletto*. Emily was not silent; she entreated Montoni, in a low voice, to consider the impropriety of these circumstances, and that he would spare her the mortification of submitting to them; he, however, was inflexible.

"This caprice is intolerable," said he, "and shall not be indulged: there is no impropriety in the case."

At this moment Emily's dislike of Count Morano rose to abhorrence. That he should with undaunted assurance thus pursue her, notwithstanding all she had expressed on the subject of his addresses, and to think, as it was evident he did, that her opinion of him was of no consequence so long as his pretensions were sanctioned by Montoni, added indignation to the disgust which she had felt toward him. She was somewhat relieved by observing that Montoni was to be of the party, who seated himself on one side of her, while Morano placed himself on the other. There was a pause for some moments as the *gondolieri* prepared their oars, and Emily trembled from the apprehension of the discourse that might follow this silence. At length she collected courage to break it herself in the hope of preventing fine speeches from Morano, and reproof from Montoni. To some trivial remark which she made the latter immediately returned a short and disobliging reply; but Morano immediately followed with a general observation, which he contrived to end with a particular compliment; and though Emily passed it without even the notice of a smile, he was not discouraged.

"I have been impatient," said he, addressing Emily, "to express my gratitude, to thank you for your goodness; but I must also thank Signor Montoni, who has allowed me this opportunity of doing so."

Emily regarded the count with a look of mingled astonishment and displeasure.

"Why," continued he, "should you wish to diminish the delight of this moment by that air of cruel reserve? Why seek to throw me again into the perplexities of doubt, by teaching your eyes to contradict the kindness of your late declaration? You cannot doubt the sincerity, the ardour of my passion; it is

therefore unnecessary, charming Emily! surely unnecessary, any longer to attempt a disguise of your sentiments."

"If I ever had disguised them, sir," said Emily with recollected spirit, "it would certainly be unnecessary any longer to do so. I had hoped, sir, that you would have spared me any further necessity of alluding to them; but since you do not grant this, hear me declare, and for the last time, that your perseverance has deprived you even of the esteem which I was inclined to believe you merited."

"Astonishing!" exclaimed Montoni: "this is beyond even my expectation, though I have hitherto done justice to the caprice of the sex! But you will observe, Mademoiselle Emily, that I am no lover, though Count Morano is, and that I will not be made the amusement of your capricious moments. Here is the offer of an alliance which would do honour to any family; yours, you will recollect, is not noble; you long resisted my remonstrances, but my honour is now engaged, and it shall not be trifled with. You shall adhere to the declaration which you have made me an agent to convey to the count."

"I must certainly mistake you, sir," said Emily; "my answers on the subject have been uniform; it is unworthy of you to accuse me of caprice. If you have condescended to be my agent, it is an honour I did not solicit. I myself have constantly assured Count Morano, and you also, sir, that I never can accept the honour he offers me, and I now repeat the declaration."

The count looked with an air of surprise and inquiry at Montoni, whose countenance also was marked with surprise, but it was surprise mingled with indignation.

"Here is confidence, as well as caprice!" said the latter. "Will you deny your own words, madame?"

"Such a question is unworthy of an answer, sir," said Emily, blushing; "you will recollect yourself, and be sorry that you have asked it."

"Speak to the point," rejoined Montoni in a voice of increasing vehemence. "Will you deny your own words? will you deny that you acknowledged, only a few hours ago, that it was too late to recede from your engagements, and that you accept the count's hand?"

"I will deny all this, for no words of mine ever imported it."

"Astonishing! Will you deny what you wrote to M. Quesnel, your uncle? If you do, your own hand will bear testimony against you. What have you now to say?" continued Montoni, observing the silence and confusion of Emily.

"I now perceive, sir, that you are under a very great error, and that I have been equally mistaken."

"No more duplicity, I entreat; be open and candid, if it be possible."

"I have always been so, sir; and can claim no merit in such conduct, for I have had nothing to conceal."

"How is this, signor?" cried Morano with trembling emotion.

"Suspend your judgment, count," replied Montoni, "the wiles of a female heart are unsearchable. Now, madame, your *explanation*."

"Excuse me, sir, if I withhold my explanation till you appear willing to give me your confidence; assertion at present can only subject me to insult."

"Your explanation, I entreat you!" said Morano.

"Well, well," rejoined Montoni, "I give you my confidence; let us hear this explanation."

"Let me lead to it, then, by asking a question."

"As many as you please," said Montoni contemptuously.

"What, then, was the subject of your letter to M. Quesnel?"

"The same that was the subject of your note to him, certainly. You did well to stipulate for my confidence before you demanded that question."

"I must beg you to be more explicit, sir; what was that subject?"

"What could it be, but the noble offer of Count Morano?" said Montoni.

"Then, sir, we entirely misunderstood each other," replied Emily.

"We entirely misunderstood each other, too, I suppose," rejoined Montoni, "in the conversation which preceded the writing of that note? I must do you the justice to own that you are very ingenious at this same art of misunderstanding."

Emily tried to restrain the tears that came to her eyes, and to answer with becoming firmness, "Allow me, sir, to explain myself fully, or to be wholly silent."

"The explanation may now be dispensed with; it is anticipated. If Count Morano still thinks one necessary, I will give him an honest one: you have changed your intention since our last conversation; and if he can have patience and humility enough to wait till to-morrow, he will probably find it changed again; but as I have neither the patience nor the humility which you expect from a lover, I warn you of the effect of my displeasure!"

"Montoni, you are too precipitate," said the count, who had listened to this conversation in extreme anxiety and impatience. "Signora, I entreat your own explanation of this affair."

"Signor Montoni has said justly," replied Emily, "that all explanation may now be dispensed with; after what has passed I cannot suffer myself to give one. It is sufficient for me, and for you, sir, that I repeat my late declaration; let me hope this is the last time it will be necessary for me to repeat it—I never can accept the honour of your alliance."

"Charming Emily!" exclaimed the count in an impassioned tone, "let not resentment make you unjust; let me not suffer for the offence of Montoni. Revoke——"

"Offence!" interrupted Montoni—"count, this language is ridiculous, this submission is childish. Speak as becomes a man, not as the slave of a petty tyrant."

"You distract me, signor; suffer me to plead my own cause: you have already proved insufficient to it."

"All conversation on this subject, sir," said Emily, "is worse than useless, since it can bring only pain to each of us: if you would oblige me, pursue it no further."

"It is impossible, madame, that I can thus easily resign the object of a passion which is the delight and torment of my life. I must still love—still pursue you with unremitting ardour;—when you shall be convinced of the strength and constancy of my passion, your heart must soften into pity and repentance."

"Is this generous, sir? is this manly? Can it either deserve or obtain the esteem you solicit, thus to continue a persecution from which I have no present means of escaping?"

A gleam of moonlight that fell upon Morano's countenance revealed the strong emotions of his soul; and, glancing on Montoni, discovered the dark resentment which contracted his features.

"By Heaven, this is too much!" suddenly exclaimed the count; "Signor Montoni, you treat me ill; it is from you that I shall look for explanation."

"From me, sir, you shall have it," muttered Montoni; "if your discernment is indeed so far obscured by passion, as to make explanation necessary. And for you, madame, you should learn, that a man of honour is not to be trifled with, though you may, perhaps, with impunity treat a *boy* like a puppet."

This sarcasm roused the pride of Morano; and the resentment which he had felt at the indifference of Emily being lost in

indignation of the insolence of Montoni, he determined to mortify him by defending her.

"This also," said he, replying to Montoni's last words, "this also shall not pass unnoticed. I bid you learn, sir, that you have a stronger enemy than a woman to contend with: I will protect Signora St. Aubert from your threatened resentment. You have misled me, and would revenge your disappointed views upon the innocent."

"Misled you!" retorted Montoni with quickness; "is my conduct—my word—" then pausing, while he seemed endeavouring to restrain the resentment that flashed in his eyes, in the next moment he added, in a subdued voice, "Count Morano, this is a language, a sort of conduct, to which I am not accustomed: it is the conduct of a passionate boy—as such, I pass it over in contempt."

"In contempt, signor?"

"The respect I owe myself," rejoined Montoni, "requires that I should converse more largely with you upon some points of the subject in dispute. Return with me to Venice, and I will condescend to convince you of your error."

"Condescend, sir! but I will not condescend so to be conversed with."

Montoni smiled contemptuously; and Emily, now terrified for the consequences of what she saw and heard, could no longer be silent. She explained the whole subject upon which she had mistaken Montoni in the morning, declaring that she understood him to have consulted her solely concerning the disposal of La Vallée, and concluded with entreating that he would write immediately to M. Quesnel, and rectify the mistake.

But Montoni either was, or affected to be, still incredulous, and Count Morano was still entangled in perplexity. While she was speaking, however, the attention of her auditors had been diverted from the immediate occasion of their resentment, and their passion consequently became less. Montoni desired the count would order his servants to row back to Venice, that he might have some private conversation with him; and Morano, somewhat soothed by his softened voice and manner, and eager to examine into the full extent of his difficulties, complied.

Emily, comforted by this prospect of release, employed the present moments in endeavouring, with conciliating care, to prevent any fatal mischief between the persons who so lately had persecuted and insulted her.

Her spirits revived, when she heard once more the voice of

song and laughter resounding from the Grand Canal, and at length entered again between its stately piazzas. The *zendalitto* stopped at Montoni's mansion, and the count hastily led her into the hall, where Montoni took his arm, and said something in a low voice, on which Morano kissed the hand he held, notwithstanding Emily's effort to disengage it, and, wishing her a good evening, with an accent and look she could not misunderstand, returned to his *zendalitto* with Montoni.

Emily, in her own apartment, considered with intense anxiety all the unjust and tyrannical conduct of Montoni, the dauntless perseverance of Morano, and her own desolate situation, removed from her friends and country. She looked in vain to Valancourt, confined by his profession to a distant kingdom, as her protector; but it gave her comfort to know that there was at least one person in the world who would sympathize in her afflictions, and whose wishes would fly eagerly to release her. Yet she determined not to give him unavailing pain by relating the reasons she had to regret the having rejected his better judgment concerning Montoni; reasons, however, which could not induce her to lament the delicacy and disinterested affection that had made her reject his proposal for a clandestine marriage. The approaching interview with her uncle she regarded with some degree of hope, for she determined to represent to him the distresses of her situation, and to entreat that he would allow her to return to France with him and Madame Quesnel. Then suddenly remembering that her beloved La Vallée, her only home, was no longer at her command, her tears flowed anew, and she feared that she had little pity to expect from a man who, like M. Quesnel, could dispose of it without deigning to consult with her, and could dismiss an aged and faithful servant, destitute of either support or asylum. But though it was certain that she had herself no longer a home in France, and few, very few friends there, she determined to return, if possible, that she might be released from the power of Montoni, whose particularly oppressive conduct towards herself, and general character as to others, were justly terrible to her imagination. She had no wish to reside with her uncle, M. Quesnel, since his behaviour to her late father, and to herself, had been uniformly such as to convince her, that in flying to him she could only obtain an exchange of oppressors; neither had she the slightest intention of consenting to the proposal of Valancourt for an immediate marriage, though this would give her a lawful and a generous protector; for the chief reasons which had formerly influenced

er conduct, still existed against it; while others, which seemed to justify the step, would now be done away; and his interest, his fame, were at all times too dear to her, to suffer her to consent to a union which, at this early period of their lives, would probably defeat both. One sure and proper asylum, however, could still be open to her in France. She knew that she could find in the convent where she had formerly experienced so much kindness, and which had an affecting and solemn claim upon her heart, since it contained the remains of her late father, where she could remain in safety and tranquillity till the term for which La Vallée might be let should expire; or till the arrangement of M. Motteville's affairs enabled her so far to estimate the remains of her fortune, as to judge whether it would be prudent for her to reside there.

Concerning Montoni's conduct with respect to his letters to Quesnel she had many doubts; however he might be at first mistaken on the subject, she much suspected that he wilfully persevered in his error, as a means of intimidating her into a compliance with his wishes of uniting her to Count Morano. Whether this was or was not the fact, she was extremely anxious to explain the affair to M. Quesnel, and looked forward with a mixture of impatience, hope, and fear to her approaching visit. On the following day Madame Montoni, being alone with Emily, introduced the mention of Count Morano, by expressing her surprise that she had not joined the party on the water on the preceding evening, and at her abrupt departure to Venice. Emily then related what had passed, expressed her concern at the mutual mistake that had occurred between Montoni and herself, and solicited her aunt's kind offices in urging him to give a decisive denial to the count's further addresses: but she soon perceived that Madame Montoni had not been ignorant of the late conversation, when she introduced the present.

"You have no encouragement to expect from me," said her aunt, "in these notions. I have already given my opinion on the subject, and think Signor Montoni right in enforcing, by any means, your consent. If young persons will be blind to their interest, and obstinately oppose it, why, the greatest blessing they can have are friends who will oppose their folly. Pray, what pretensions of any kind do you think you have to such a match as is now offered you?"

"Not any whatever, madame," replied Emily; "and therefore, aunt, suffer me to be happy in my humility."

"Nay, niece, it cannot be denied that you have pride enough;

my poor brother, your father, had his share of pride too; though let me add, his fortune did not justify it."

Emily, somewhat embarrassed by the indignation which this malevolent allusion to her father excited, and by the difficulty of rendering her answer as temperate as it should be reprehensive, hesitated for some moments in a confusion which highly gratified her aunt. At length she said, "My father's pride, madame, had a noble object—the happiness which he knew could be derived only from goodness, knowledge, and charity. As it never consisted in his superiority in point of fortune to some persons, it was not humbled by his inferiority in that respect to others. He never disdained those who were wretched by poverty and misfortune; he did sometimes despise persons who, with many opportunities of happiness, rendered themselves miserable by vanity, ignorance, and cruelty. I shall think it my highest glory to emulate such pride."

"I do not pretend to understand anything of these high-flown sentiments, niece: you have all that glory to yourself: I would teach you a little plain sense, and not have you so wise as to despise happiness."

"That would indeed not be wisdom, but folly," said Emily, "for wisdom can boast no higher attainment than happiness; but you will allow, madame, that our ideas of happiness may differ. I cannot doubt that you wish me to be happy, but I must fear you are mistaken in the means of making me so."

"I cannot boast of a learned education, niece, such as your father thought proper to give you, and therefore do not pretend to understand all these fine speeches about happiness; I must be contented to understand only common sense; and happy would it have been for you and your father if that had been included in his education."

Emily was too much shocked by these reflections on her father's memory, to despise this speech as it deserved.

Madame Montoni was about to speak; but Emily quitted the room, and retired to her own, where the little spirit she had lately exerted yielded to grief and vexation, and left her only to her tears. From every review of her situation she could derive, indeed, only new sorrow. To the discovery that had just been forced upon her, of Montoni's unworthiness, she had now to add that of the cruel vanity for the gratification of which her aunt was about to sacrifice her; of the effrontery and cunning with which, at the time that she meditated the sacrifice, she boasted of her tenderness, or insulted her victim; and of the venomous

envy which, as it did not scruple to attack her father's character, could scarcely be expected to withhold from her own.

During the few days that intervened between this conversation and the departure for Miarenti, Montoni did not once address himself to Emily. His looks sufficiently declared his resentment: but that he should forbear to renew a mention of the subject of it, exceedingly surprised her, who was no less astonished that, during three days, Count Morano neither visited Montoni nor was named by him. Several conjectures arose in her mind. Sometimes she feared that the dispute between them had been revived, and had ended fatally to the count. Sometimes she was inclined to hope that weariness, or disgust at her firm rejection of his suit, had induced him to relinquish it; and at others, she suspected that he had now recourse to stratagem, and forbore his visits, and prevailed with Montoni to forbear the repetition of his name, in the expectation that gratitude and generosity would prevail with her to give him the consent which he could not hope from love.

Thus passed the time in vain conjecture and alternate hopes and fears, till the day arrived when Montoni was to set out for the villa of Miarenti, which, like the preceding ones, neither brought the count, nor the mention of him.

Montoni having determined not to leave Venice till towards evening, that he might avoid the heats, and catch the cold breezes of night, embarked about an hour before sunset, with his family, in a barge, for the Brenta. Emily sat alone near the stern of the vessel, and, as it floated slowly on, watched the gay and lofty city lessening from her view, till its palaces seemed to sink in the distant waves, while its loftier towers and domes, illumined by the declining sun, appeared on the horizon, like those far-seen clouds which in more northern climes often linger on the western verge, and catch the last light of a summer's evening. Soon after, even these grew dim, and faded in distance from her sight; but she still sat gazing on the vast scene of cloudless sky and mighty waters, and listening in pleasing awe to the deep-sounding waves, while, as her eyes glanced over the Adriatic towards the opposite shores, which were, however, far beyond the reach of sight, she thought of Greece; and a thousand classical remembrances stealing to her mind, she experienced that pensive luxury which is felt on viewing the scenes of ancient story, and on comparing their present state of silence and solitude with that of their former grandeur and animation. The scenes of the *Iliad* illapsed in glowing colours to her fancy—scenes, once the haunt

of heroes—now lonely, and in ruins; but which still shone, in the poet's strain, in all their youthful splendour.

As her imagination painted with melancholy touches the deserted plains of Troy, such as they appeared in this after-day, she reanimated the landscape with the following little story:

STANZAS

O'er Ilion's plains, where once the warrior bled,
And once the poet raised his deathless strain,
O'er Ilion's plains a weary driver led
His stately camels. For the ruin'd fane

Wide round the lonely scene his glance he threw,
For now the red cloud faded in the west,
And twilight o'er the silent landscape drew
Her deepening veil; eastward his course he prest.

There, on the grey horizon's glimmering bound,
Rose the proud columns of deserted Troy,
And wandering shepherds now a shelter found
Within those walls where princes wont to joy.

Beneath a lofty porch the driver pass'd,
Then, from his camels heaved the heavy load;
Partook with them the simple, cool repast,
And in short vesper gave himself to God.

From distant lands with merchandise he came,
His all of wealth his patient servants bore;
Oft deep-drawn sighs his anxious wish proclaim
To reach, again, his happy cottage door;

For there, his wife, his little children dwell;
Their smiles shall pay the toil of many an hour;
E'en now warm tears to expectation swell,
As fancy o'er his mind extends her power.

A death-like stillness reign'd, where once the song,
The song of heroes, waked the midnight air,
Save, when a solemn murmur roll'd along,
That seem'd to say—For future worlds prepare.

For Time's imperious voice was frequent heard
Shaking the marble temple to its fall
(By hands he long had conquer'd; vainly rear'd),
And distant ruins answer'd to his call.

While Hamet slept, his camels round him lay,
Beneath him, all his store of wealth was piled;
And here, his cruse and empty wallet lay,
And there, the flute that cheer'd him in the wild.

The robber Tartar on his slumber stole,
 For o'er the waste, at eve, he watched his train;
 Ah! who his thirst of plunder shall control?
 Who calls on him for mercy—calls in vain!

A poison'd poniard in his belt he bore,
 A crescent sword depended at his side,
 The deathful quiver at his back he bore,
 And infants—at his very look had died!

The moon's cold beam athwart the temple fell,
 And to his sleeping prey the Tartar led;
 But, soft!—a startled camel shook his bell,
 Then stretch'd his limbs, and rear'd his drowsy head.

Hamet awoke! the poniard glitter'd high!
 Swift from his couch he sprung, and 'scaped the blow:
 When from an unknown hand the arrows fly,
 That lay the ruffian, in his vengeance, low.

He groan'd, he died! from forth a column'd gate
 A fearful shepherd pale and silent crept,
 Who, as he watch'd his folded flock star-late,
 Had mark'd the robber steal where Hamet slept.

He fear'd his own, and saved a stranger's life!
 Poor Hamet clasp'd him to his grateful heart;
 Then, roused his camels for the dusty strife,
 And with the shepherd hasten'd to depart.

And now Aurora breathes her freshening gale,
 And faintly trembles on the eastern cloud;
 And now the sun from under twilight's veil
 Looks gaily forth, and melts her airy shroud.

Wide o'er the level plains his slanting beams
 Dart their long lines on Ilion's towered site;
 The distant Hellespont with morning gleams,
 And old Scamander winds his waves in light.

All merry sound the camel bells so gay,
 And merry beats fond Hamet's heart; for he,
 Ere the dim evening steals upon the day,
 His children, wife and happy home shall see.

As Emily approached the shores of Italy she began to discriminate the rich features and varied colouring of the landscape—the purple hills, groves of orange, pine, and cypress, shading magnificent villas, and towns rising among vineyards and plantations. The noble Brenta, pouring its broad waves into the sea, now appeared; and when she reached its mouth, the barge stopped

that the horses might be fastened which were now to tow it up the stream. This done, Emily gave a last look to the Adriatic, and to the dim sail

. . . that from the sky-mix'd wave
Dawns on the sight;

and the barge slowly glided between the green and luxuriant slopes of the river. The grandeur of the Palladian villas that adorn these shores was considerably heightened by the setting rays, which threw strong contrasts of light and shade upon the porticoes and long arcades, and beamed a mellow lustre upon the orangeries and the tall groves of pine and cypress that overhung the buildings. The scent of oranges, of flowering myrtles and other odoriferous plants, was diffused upon the air, and often from these embowered retreats a strain of music stole on the calm, and softened into silence.

The sun now sunk below the horizon, twilight fell over the landscape, and Emily, wrapt in musing silence, continued to watch its features gradually vanishing into obscurity. She remembered her many happy evenings, when with St. Aubert she had observed the shades of twilight steal over a scene as beautiful as this, from the gardens of La Vallée; and a tear fell to the memory of her father. Her spirits were softened into melancholy by the influence of the hour, by the low murmur of the wave passing under the vessel, and the stillness of the air, that trembled only at intervals with distant music:—why else should she, at these moments, have looked on her attachment to Valancourt with presages so very afflicting, since she had but lately received letters from him that had soothed for a while all her anxieties? It now seemed to her oppressed mind that she had taken leave of him for ever, and that the countries which separated them would nevermore be traced by her. She looked upon Count Morano with horror, as in some degree the cause of this; but apart from him, a conviction, if such that may be called which arises from no proof, and which she knew not how to account for, seized her mind—that she should never see Valancourt again. Though she knew that neither Morano's solicitations nor Montoni's commands had lawful power to enforce her obedience, she regarded both with a superstitious dread, that they would finally prevail.

Lost in this melancholy reverie, and shedding frequent tears, Emily was at length roused by Montoni; and she followed him to the cabin, where refreshments were spread, and her aunt

was seated alone. The countenance of Madame Montoni was inflamed with resentment that appeared to be the consequence of some conversation she had held with her husband, who regarded her with a kind of sullen disdain; and both preserved for some time a haughty silence. Montoni then spoke to Emily of M. Quesnel: "You will not, I hope, persist in disclaiming your knowledge of the subject of my letter to him."

"I had hoped, sir, that it was no longer necessary for me to disclaim it," said Emily; "I had hoped, from your silence, that you were convinced of your error."

"You have hoped impossibilities then," replied Montoni; "I might as reasonably have expected to find sincerity and uniformity of conduct in one of your sex, as you to convict me of error in this affair."

Emily blushed, and was silent; she now perceived too clearly that she had hoped an impossibility: for where no mistake had been committed, no conviction could follow: and it was evident that Montoni's conduct had not been the consequence of mistake, but of design.

Anxious to escape from conversation which was both afflicting and humiliating to her, she soon returned to the deck, and resumed her station near the stern, without apprehension of cold, for no vapour rose from the water, and the air was dry and tranquil; here, at least, the benevolence of nature allowed her the quiet which Montoni had denied her elsewhere. It was now past midnight. The stars shed a kind of twilight, that served to show the dark outline of the shores on either hand, and the grey surface of the river; till the moon rose from behind a high palm-grove, and shed her mellow lustre over the scene. The vessel glided smoothly on; amid the stillness of the hour Emily heard, now and then, the solitary voice of the bargemen on the bank, as they spoke to their horses; while from a remote part of the vessel, with melancholy song,

. . . the sailor soothed,
Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave.

Emily, meanwhile, anticipated her reception by Monsieur and Madame Quesnel; considered what she could say on the subject of La Vallée; and then, to withhold her mind from more anxious topics, tried to amuse herself by discriminating the faint-drawn features of the landscape reposing in the moonlight. While her fancy thus wandered, she saw at a distance a building peeping between the moonlight trees, and as the barge approached, heard

voices speaking, and soon distinguished the lofty porticoes of a villa overshadowed by groves of pine and sycamore, which she recollected to be the same that had formerly been pointed out to her as belonging to Madame Quesnel's relative.

The barge stopped at a flight of marble steps, which led up the bank to a lawn. Lights appeared between some pillars beyond the portico. Montoni sent forward his servant, and then disembarked with his family. They found Monsieur and Madame Quesnel with a few friends, seated on sofas in the portico, enjoying the cool breeze of the night, and eating fruits and ices, while some of their servants at a little distance on the river's bank were performing a simple serenade. Emily was now accustomed to the way of living in this warm country, and was not surprised to find Monsieur and Madame Quesnel in their portico two hours after midnight.

The usual salutations being over, the company seated themselves in the portico, and refreshments were brought them from the adjoining hall, where a banquet was spread, and the servants attended. When the bustle of this meeting had subsided, and Emily had recovered from the little flutter into which it had thrown her spirits, she was struck with the singular beauty of the hall, so perfectly accommodated to the luxuries of the season. It was of white marble, and the roof, rising into an open cupola, was supported by columns of the same material. Two opposite sides of the apartment, terminating in open porticoes, admitted to the hall a full view of the gardens and of the river scenery; in the centre a fountain continually refreshed the air, and seemed to heighten the fragrance that breathed from the surrounding orangeries, while its dashing waters gave an agreeable and soothing sound. Etruscan lamps, suspended from the pillars, diffused a brilliant light over the interior part of the hall, leaving the remoter porticoes to the softer lustre of the moon.

M. Quesnel talked apart to Montoni of his own affairs in his usual strain of self-importance; boasted of his new acquisitions, and then affected to pity some disappointments which Montoni had lately sustained. Meanwhile the latter, whose pride at least enabled him to despise such vanity as this, and whose discernment at once detected, under this assumed pity, the frivolous malignity of Quesnel's mind, listened to him in contemptuous silence till he named his niece, and then they left the portico and walked away into the gardens.

Emily, however, still attended to Madame Quesnel, who spoke

of France (for even the name of her native country was dear to her), and she found some pleasure in looking at a person who had lately been in it. That country, too, was inhabited by Valancourt, and she listened to the mention of it with a faint hope that he also would be named. Madame Quesnel, who when she was in France had talked with rapture of Italy, now that she was in Italy talked with equal praise of France, and endeavoured to excite the wonder and the envy of her auditors by accounts of places which they had not been happy enough to see. In these descriptions she not only imposed upon them, but upon herself; for she never thought a present pleasure equal to one that was past: and thus the delicious climate, the fragrant orangeries, and all the luxuries which surrounded her, slept unnoticed, while her fancy wandered over the distant scenes of a northern country.

Emily listened in vain for the name of Valancourt. Madame Montoni spoke in her turn of the delights of Venice, and of the pleasure she expected from visiting the fine castle of Montoni, on the Apennine; which latter mention at least was merely a retaliating boast, for Emily well knew that her aunt had no taste for solitary grandeur, and particularly for such as the castle of Udolpho promised. Thus the party continued to converse and, as far as civility would permit, to torture each other by mutual boasts, while they reclined on sofas in the portico, and were environed with delights both from nature and art, by which any honest minds would have been tempered to benevolence, and happy imaginations would have been soothed into enchantment.

The dawn soon after trembled in the eastern horizon, and the light tints of morning gradually expanding showed the beautifully declining forms of the Italian mountains, and the gleaming landscapes stretched at their feet. Then the sunbeams, shooting up from behind the hills, spread over the scene that saffron tinge which seems to impart repose to all its touches. The landscape no longer gleamed; all its glowing colours were revealed, except that its remoter features were still softened and united in the midst of distance, whose sweet effect was heightened to Emily by the dark verdure of the pines and cypresses that overarched the foreground of the river.

The market people passing with their boats to Venice now formed a moving picture of the Brenta. Most of these had little painted awnings, to shelter their owners from the sunbeams, which, together with the piles of fruit and flowers displayed

beneath, and the tasteful simplicity of the peasant girls who watched the rural treasures, rendered them gay and striking objects. The swift movement of the boats down the current, the quick glance of oars in the water, and now and then the passing chorus of peasants who reclined under the sail of their little bark, or the tones of some rustic instrument played by a girl as she sat near her sylvan cargo, heightened the animation and festivity of the scene.

When Montoni and M. Quesnel had joined the ladies, the party left the portico for the gardens, where the charming scenery soon withdrew Emily's thoughts from painful objects. The majestic forms and rich verdure of cypresses she had never seen so perfect before: groves of cedar, lemon, and orange, the spiry clusters of the pine and poplar, the luxuriant chestnut and oriental plane, threw all their pomp of shade over these gardens; while bowers of flowering myrtle and other spicy shrubs mingled their fragrance with that of flowers whose vivid and various colouring glowed with increased effect beneath the contrasted umbrage of the groves. The air also was continually refreshed by rivulets, which, with more taste than fashion, had been suffered to wander among the green recesses.

Emily often lingered behind the party to contemplate the distant landscape, that closed a vista, or that gleamed beneath the dark foliage of the foreground; the spiral summits of the mountains, touched with a purple tint, broken and steep above, but shelving gradually to their base; the open valley, marked by no formed lines of art; and the tall groves of cypress, pine, and poplar, sometimes embellished by a ruined villa, whose broken columns appeared between the branches of a pine that seemed to droop over their fall.

From other parts of the gardens, the character of the view was entirely changed, and the fine solitary beauty of the landscape shifted for the crowded features and varied colouring of inhabitation.

The sun was now gaining fast upon the sky, and the party quitted the gardens, and retired to repose.

CHAPTER XVII

And poor Misfortune feels the lash of Vice.

THOMSON.

EMILY seized the first opportunity of conversing alone with M. Quesnel concerning La Vallée. His answers to her inquiries were concise, and delivered with the air of a man who is conscious of possessing absolute power, and impatient of hearing it questioned. He declared that the disposal of the place was a necessary measure; and that she might consider herself indebted to his prudence for even the small income that remained for her. "But, however," he added, "when this Venetian count (I have forgot his name) marries you, your present disagreeable state of dependence will cease. As a relation to you I rejoice in the circumstance, which is so fortunate for you, and, I may add, so unexpected by your friends."

For some moments Emily was chilled into silence by this speech; and when she attempted to undeceive him concerning the purport of the note she had enclosed in Montoni's letter, he appeared to have some private reason for disbelieving her assertion, and for a considerable time persevered in accusing her of capricious conduct. Being at length, however, convinced that she really disliked Morano, and had positively rejected his suit, his resentment was extravagant, and he expressed it in terms equally pointed and inhuman; for secretly flattered by the prospect of a connexion with a nobleman whose title he had affected to forget, he was incapable of feeling pity for whatever sufferings of his niece might stand in the way of his ambition.

Emily saw at once in his manner all the difficulties that awaited her; and though no oppression could have power to make her renounce Valancourt for Morano, her fortitude now trembled at an encounter with the violent passions of her uncle.

She opposed his turbulence and indignation only by the mild dignity of a superior mind, but the gentle firmness of her conduct served to exasperate still more his resentment, since it compelled him to feel his own inferiority; and when he left her, he declared that, if she persisted in her folly, both himself and Montoni would abandon her to the contempt of the world.

The calmness she had assumed in his presence failed Emily when alone, and she wept bitterly, and called frequently upon the name of her departed father, whose advice to her from his death-bed she then remembered. "Alas!" said she, "I do indeed

perceive how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude than the grace of sensibility, and I will also endeavour to fulfil the promise I then made; I will not indulge in unavailing lamentations, but will try to endure with firmness the oppression I cannot elude."

Somewhat soothed by the consciousness of performing a part of St. Aubert's last request, and of endeavouring to pursue the conduct which he would have approved, she overcame her tears, and, when the company met at dinner, had recovered her usual serenity of countenance.

In the cool of the evening the ladies took the *fresco* along the bank of the Brenta in Madame Quesnel's carriage. The state of Emily's mind was in melancholy contrast with the gay groups assembled beneath the shades that overhung this enchanting stream. Some were dancing under the trees, and others reclining on the grass taking ices and coffee, and calmly enjoying the effect of a beautiful evening on a luxuriant landscape. Emily, when she looked at the snow-capped Apennines ascending in the distance, thought of Montoni's castle, and suffered some terror lest he should carry her thither for the purpose of enforcing her obedience; but this thought vanished when she considered that she was as much in his power at Venice as she could be elsewhere.

It was moonlight before the party returned to the villa, where supper was spread in the airy hall which had so much enchanted Emily's fancy on the preceding night. The ladies seated themselves in the portico, till M. Quesnel, Montoni, and other gentlemen should join them at the table; and Emily endeavoured to resign herself to the tranquillity of the hour. Presently, a barge stopped at the steps that led into the gardens, and soon after she distinguished the voices of Montoni and Quesnel, and then that of Morano, who in the next moment appeared. His compliments she received in silence, and her cold air seemed at first to discompose him; but he soon recovered his usual gaiety of manner, though the officious kindness of Monsieur and Madame Quesnel, Emily perceived, disgusted him. Such a degree of attention she had scarcely believed could be shown by M. Quesnel, for she had never before seen him otherwise than in the presence of his inferiors or equals.

When she could retire to her own apartment, her mind almost involuntarily dwelt on the most probable means of prevailing with the count to withdraw his suit; and to her liberal mind none appeared more probable, than that of acknowledging to him a

prior attachment, and throwing herself upon his generosity for a release. When, however, on the following day, he renewed his addresses, she shrunk from the adoption of the plan she had formed. There was something so repugnant to her just pride, in laying open the secret of her heart to such a man as Morano, and in suing to him for compassion, that she impatiently rejected this design, and wondered that she could have paused upon it for a moment. The rejection of his suit she repeated in the most decisive terms she could select, mingling with it a severe censure of his conduct; but though the count appeared mortified by this, he persevered in the most ardent professions of admiration, till he was interrupted and released by the presence of Madame Quesnel.

During her stay at this pleasant villa, Emily was thus rendered miserable by the assiduities of Morano, together with the cruelly exerted authority of M. Quesnel and Montoni, who, with her aunt, seemed now more resolutely determined upon this marriage than they had even appeared to be at Venice. M. Quesnel, finding that both argument and menace were ineffectual in enforcing an immediate conclusion to it, at length relinquished his endeavours, and trusted to the power of Montoni and to the course of events at Venice. Emily, indeed, looked to Venice with hope, for there she would be relieved in some measure from the persecution of Morano, who would no longer be an inhabitant of the same house with herself; and from that of Montoni, whose engagements would not permit him to be continually at home. But amidst the pressure of her own misfortunes, she did not forget those of poor Theresa, for whom she pleaded with courageous tenderness to Quesnel, who promised, in slight and general terms, that she should not be forgotten.

Montoni, in a long conversation with M. Quesnel, arranged the plan to be pursued respecting Emily; and M. Quesnel proposed to be at Venice, as soon as he should be informed that the nuptials were concluded.

It was new to Emily to part with any person with whom she was connected without feeling of regret; the moment, however, in which she took leave of Monsieur and Madame Quesnel was, perhaps, the only satisfactory one she had known in their presence.

Morano returned in Montoni's barge; and Emily, as she watched her gradual approach to that magic city, saw at her side the only person who occasioned her to view it with less than perfect delight. They arrived there about midnight when Emily was released from the presence of the count, who with Montoni

went to a casino, and she was suffered to retire to her own apartment.

On the following day Montoni, in a short conversation which he held with Emily, informed her that he would no longer be *trifled* with, and that, since her marriage with the count would be so highly advantageous to her that folly only could object to it, and folly of such extent as was incapable of conviction, it should be celebrated without further delay, and, if that was necessary, without her consent.

Emily, who had hitherto tried remonstrance, had now recourse to supplication, for distress prevented her from foreseeing that, with a man of Montoni's disposition, supplication would be equally useless. She afterwards inquired by what right he exerted this unlimited authority over her, a question which her better judgment would have withheld her in a calmer moment from making, since it could avail her nothing, and would afford Montoni another opportunity of triumphing over her defenceless condition.

"By what right!" cried Montoni with a malicious smile; "by the right of my will; if you can elude that I will not inquire by what right you do so. I now remind you, for the last time, that you are a stranger in a foreign country, and that it is your interest to make me your friend; you know the means: if you compel me to be your enemy—I will venture to tell you that the punishment shall exceed your expectation. You may know *I* am not to be trifled with."

Emily continued, for some time after Montoni had left her, in a state of despair, or rather stupefaction; a consciousness of misery was all that remained in her mind. In this situation Madame Montoni found her, at the sound of whose voice Emily looked up; and her aunt, somewhat softened by the expression of despair that fixed her countenance, spoke in a manner more kind than she had ever yet done. Emily's heart was touched; she shed tears, and after weeping for some time recovered sufficient composure to speak on the subject of her distress, and to endeavour to interest Madame Montoni in her behalf. But though the compassion of her aunt had been surprised, her ambition was not to be overcome, and her present object was to be the aunt of a countess. Emily's efforts, therefore, were as unsuccessful as they had been with Montoni; and she withdrew, to her apartment to think and weep alone. How often did she remember the parting scene with Valancourt, and wish that the Italian had mentioned Montoni's character with less reserve!

When her mind, however, had recovered from her first shock of this behaviour, she considered that it would be impossible for him to compel her alliance with Morano, if she persisted in refusing to repeat any part of the marriage ceremony; and she persevered in her resolution to await Montoni's threatened vengeance, rather than give herself for life to a man whom she must have despised for his present conduct had she never even loved Valancourt; yet she trembled at the revenge she thus resolved to brave.

An affair, however, soon after occurred, which somewhat called off Montoni's attention from Emily. The mysterious visits of Orsino were renewed with more frequency since the return of the former to Venice. There were others also besides Orsino admitted to these midnight councils, and among them Cavigni and Verezzi. Montoni became more reserved and austere in his manner than ever; and Emily, if her own interests had not made her regardless of his, might have perceived that something extraordinary was working in his mind.

One night, on which a council was not held, Orsino came in great agitation of spirits, and dispatched his confidential servant to Montoni, who was at a casino, desiring that he would return home immediately; but charging the servant not to mention his name. Montoni obeyed the summons and, on meeting Orsino, was informed of the circumstances that occasioned his visit and his visible alarm, with some of which, however, he was already acquainted.

A Venetian nobleman who had on a late occasion provoked the hatred of Orsino, had been waylaid and poniarded by hired assassins; and as the murdered person was of the first connexions, the Senate had taken up the affair. One of the assassins was now apprehended, who had confessed that Orsino was his employer in the atrocious deed; and the latter, informed of his danger, had now come to Montoni to consult on the measures necessary to favour his escape. He knew that at this time the officers of the police were upon the watch for him all over the city; to leave it at present, therefore, was impracticable; and Montoni consented to secrete him for a few days till the vigilance of justice should relax, and then to assist him in quitting Venice. He knew the danger he himself incurred by permitting Orsino to remain in his house; but such was the nature of his obligations to this man, that he did not think it prudent to refuse him an asylum.

Such was the person whom Montoni admitted to his confidence,

and for whom he felt as much friendship as was compatible with his character.

While Orsino remained concealed in his house, Montoni was unwilling to attract public observation by the nuptials of Count Morano; but this obstacle was in a few days overcome by the departure of his criminal visitor; and he then informed Emily that her marriage was to be celebrated on the following morning. *To her repeated assurances that it should not take place*, he replied by a malignant smile; and telling her that the count and a priest would be at his house early in the morning, he advised her no further to dare his resentment by opposition to his will and to her own interest. "I am now going out for the evening," said he; "remember that I shall give your hand to Count Morano in the morning." Emily, having ever since his late threats expected that her trials would at length arrive to this crisis, was less shocked by this declaration than she otherwise would have been, and she endeavoured to support herself by a belief that the marriage could not be valid so long as she refused before the priest to repeat any part of the ceremony. Yet, as the moment of trial approached, her long-harassed spirits shrunk almost equally from the encounter of his vengeance and from the hand of Count Morano. She was not even perfectly certain of the consequence of her steady refusal at the altar, and she trembled more than ever at the power of Montoni, which seemed unlimited as his will; for she saw that he would not scruple to transgress any law, if by so doing he could accomplish his project.

While her mind was thus suffering, she was informed that Morano asked permission to see her; and the servant had scarcely departed with an excuse, before she repented that she had sent one. In the next moment, reverting to her former design, and determining to try whether expostulation and entreaty would not succeed where a refusal and a just disdain had failed, she recalled the servant, and, sending a different message, prepared to go down to the count.

The dignity and assumed composure with which she met him, and the kind of pensive resignation that softened her countenance, were circumstances not likely to induce him to relinquish her, serving, as they did, to heighten a passion which had already intoxicated his judgment. He listened to all she said with an appearance of complacency and of a wish to oblige her; but his resolution remained invariably the same, and he endeavoured to win her admiration by every insinuating art he so well knew how to practise. Being at length assured that she had nothing to

hope from his justice, she repeated in a solemn manner her absolute rejection of his suit, and quitted him with an assurance that her refusal would be effectually maintained against every circumstance that could be imagined for subduing it. A just pride had restrained her tears in his presence, but now they flowed from the fullness of her heart. She often called upon the name of her late father and often dwelt with unutterable anguish on the idea of Valancourt.

She did not go down to supper, but remained alone in her apartment, sometimes yielding to the influence of grief and terror and at others endeavouring to fortify her mind against them, and to prepare herself to meet with composed courage the scene of the following morning, when all the stratagem of Morano and the violence of Montoni would be united against her.

The evening was far advanced, when Madame Montoni came to her chamber with some bridal ornaments which the count had sent to Emily. She had this day purposely avoided her niece; perhaps because her usual insensibility failed her, and she feared to trust herself with a view of Emily's distress; or possibly, though her conscience was seldom audible, it now reproached her with her conduct to her brother's orphan child, whose happiness had been entrusted to her care by a dying father.

Emily could not look at these presents, and made a last, though almost hopeless, effort to interest the compassion of Madame Montoni, who, if she did feel any degree of pity or remorse, successfully concealed it, and reproached her niece with folly in being miserable concerning a marriage which ought only to make her happy. "I am sure," said she, "if I was unmarried, and the count had proposed to me, I should have been flattered by the distinction; and if I should have been so, I am sure, niece, you, who have no fortune, ought to feel yourself highly honoured, and show a proper gratitude and humility towards the count for his condescension. I am often surprised, I must own, to observe how humbly he deports himself to you, notwithstanding the haughty airs you give yourself; I wonder he has patience to humour you so; if I were he, I know I should often be ready to reprehend you, and make you know yourself a little better. I would not have flattered you, I can tell you; for it is this absurd flattery that makes you fancy yourself of so much consequence, that you think nobody can deserve you; and I often tell the count so, for I have no patience to hear him pay you such extravagant compliments, which you believe every word of!"

"Your patience, madame, cannot suffer more cruelly on such occasions than my own," said Emily.

"Oh! that is all mere affectation," rejoined her aunt. "I know that his flattery delights you, and makes you so vain that you think you may have the whole world at your feet. But you are very much mistaken; I can assure you, niece, you will not meet with many such suitors as the count: every other person would have turned upon his heel, and left you to repent at your leisure, long ago."

"Oh! that the count had resembled every other person, then!" said Emily with a heavy sigh.

"It is happy for you that he does not," rejoined Madame Montoni; "and what I am now saying is from pure kindness. I am endeavouring to convince you of your good fortune, and to persuade you to submit to necessity with a good grace. It is nothing to me, you know, whether you like this marriage or not, for it must be; what I say, therefore, is from pure kindness: I wish to see you happy, and it is your own fault if you are not so. I would ask you now, seriously and calmly, what kind of a match you can expect, since a count cannot content your ambition?"

"I have no ambition, whatever, madame," replied Emily; "my only wish is to remain in my present station."

"Oh! that is speaking quite from the purpose," said her aunt; "I see you are still thinking of M. Valancourt. Pray get rid of all those fantastic notions about love, and this ridiculous pride, and be something like a reasonable creature. But, however, this is nothing to the purpose—for your marriage with the count takes place to-morrow, you know, whether you approve it or not. The count will be trifled with no longer."

Emily made no attempt to reply to this curious speech; she felt it would be mean, and she knew it would be useless. Madame Montoni laid the count's presents upon the table on which Emily was leaning, and then, desiring she would be ready early in the morning, bade her good night. "Good night, madame," said Emily, with a deep sigh, as the door closed upon her aunt; and she was left once more to her own sad reflections. For some time she sat so lost in thought, as to be wholly unconscious where she was; at length raising her head, and looking round the room, its gloom and profound stillness awed her. She fixed her eyes on the door through which her aunt had disappeared, and listened anxiously for some sound that might relieve the deep dejection of her spirits; but it was past midnight,

and all the family except the servant who sat up for Montoni had retired to bed. Her mind, long harassed by distress, now yielded to imaginary terrors; she trembled to look into the obscurity of her spacious chamber, and feared she knew not what; a state of mind which continued so long, that she would have called up Annette, her aunt's woman, had her fears permitted her to rise from her chair and to cross the apartment.

These melancholy illusions at length began to disperse, and she retired to her bed, not to sleep, for that was scarcely possible, but to try at least to quiet her disturbed fancy, and to collect strength of spirits sufficient to bear her through the scene of the approaching morning.

CHAPTER XVIII

Dark power! with shuddering, meek submitted thought,
Be mine to read the visions old
Which thy awakening bards have told,
And, lest they meet my blasted view,
Hold each strange tale devoutly true.

COLLINS'S *Ode to Fear*.

EMILY was recalled from a kind of slumber, into which she had at length sunk, by a quick knocking at her chamber; she started up in terror. Montoni and Count Morano instantly came to her mind; but having listened in silence for some time, and recognizing the voice of Annette, she ventured to open the door. "What brings you hither so early?" said Emily, trembling excessively.

"Dear ma'amselle!" said Annette, "do not look so pale. I am quite frightened to see you. Here is a fine bustle below stairs, all the servants running to and fro, and none of them fast enough! Here is a bustle indeed all of a sudden, and nobody knows for what!"

"Who is below besides them?" said Emily: "Annette, do not trifle with me."

"Not for the world, ma'amselle, I would not trifle for the world; but one cannot help making one's remarks: and there is the signor in such a bustle as I never saw him before; and he has sent me to tell you, ma'am, to get ready immediately."

"Good God, support me!" cried Emily, almost fainting: "Count Morano is below, then!"

"No, ma'amselle, he is not below that I know of," replied

Annette; "only his *Excellenza* sent me to desire you would get ready directly to leave Venice, for that the gondolas would be at the steps of the canal in a few minutes; but I must hurry back to my lady, who is just at her wits' end, and knows not which way to turn for haste."

"Explain, Annette, explain the meaning of all this before you go," said Emily, so overcome with surprise and timid hope that she had scarcely breath to speak.

"Nay, ma'amselle, that is more than I can do. I only know that the signor is just come home in a very ill humour; that he has had us all called out of our beds, and tells us we are all to leave Venice immediately."

"Is Count Morano to go with the signor?" said Emily; "and whither are we going?"

"I know neither, ma'am, for certain; but I heard Ludovico say something about going, after we got to terra firma, to the signor's castle among the mountains that he talked of."

"The Apennines!" said Emily eagerly; "oh! then I have little to hope!"

"That is the very place, ma'am. But cheer up, and do not take it so much to heart, and think what a little time you have to get ready in, and how impatient the signor is. Holy St. Mark! I hear the oars on the canal; and now they come nearer, and now they are dashing at the steps below; it is the gondola, sure enough."

Annette hastened from the room; and Emily prepared for this unexpected flight, not perceiving that any change in her situation could possibly be for the worse. She had scarcely thrown her books and clothes into her travelling-trunk, when receiving a second summons, she went down to her aunt's dressing-room, where she found Montoni impatiently reproving his wife for delay. He went out soon after, to give some further orders to his people, and Emily then inquired the occasion of his hasty journey; but her aunt appeared to be as ignorant as herself, and to undertake the journey with more reluctance.

The family at length embarked, but neither Count Morano nor Cavigni was of the party. Somewhat revived by observing this, Emily, when the *gondolieri* dashed their oars in the water, and put off from the steps of the portico, felt like a criminal who receives a short reprieve. Her heart beat yet lighter, when they emerged from the canal into the ocean, and lighter still, when they skimmed past the walls of St. Mark, without having stopped to take the Count Morano.

The dawn now began to tint the horizon, and to break upon the shores of the Adriatic. Emily did not venture to ask any questions of Montoni, who sat, for some time, in gloomy silence, and then rolled himself up in his cloak, as if to sleep, while Madame Montoni did the same: but Emily, who could not sleep, undrew one of the little curtains of the gondola, and looked out upon the sea. The rising dawn now enlightened the mountain tops of Friuli; but their lower sides, and the distant waves that rolled at their feet, were still in deep shadow. Emily, sunk in tranquil melancholy, watched the strengthening light spreading upon the ocean, showing progressively Venice with her islets, and the shores of Italy, along which boats with their pointed lateen sails began to move.

The *gondolieri* were frequently hailed at this early hour by the market people, as they glided by towards Venice, and the lagoon soon displayed a gay scene of innumerable little barks passing from terra firma with provisions. Emily gave a last look to that splendid city; but her mind was then occupied by considering the probable events that awaited her in the scenes to which she was removing, and with conjectures concerning the motive of this sudden journey. It appeared, upon calmer consideration, that Montoni was removing her to his secluded castle, because he could there with more probability of success attempt to terrify her into obedience: or that, should its gloomy and sequestered scenes fail of this effect, her forced marriage with the count could there be solemnized with the secrecy which was necessary to the honour of Montoni. The little spirit which this reprieve had recalled now began to fail, and when Emily reached the shore, her mind had sunk into all its former depression.

Montoni did not embark on the Brenta, but pursued his way in carriages across the country towards the Apennine; during which journey his manner to Emily was so particularly severe, that this alone would have confirmed her late conjecture, had any such confirmation been necessary. Her senses were now dead to the beautiful country through which she travelled. Sometimes she was compelled to smile at the *naïveté* of Annette, in her remarks on what she saw, and sometimes to sigh, as a scene of peculiar beauty recalled Valancourt to her thoughts, who was indeed seldom absent from them, and of whom she could never hope to hear in the solitude to which she was hastening.

At length the travellers began to ascend among the Appenines.

The immense pine-forests which at that period overhung these mountains, and between which the road wound, excluded all view but of the cliffs aspiring above, except that now and then an opening through the dark woods allowed the eye a momentary glimpse of the country below. The gloom of these shades, their solitary silence, except when the breeze swept over their summits, the tremendous precipices of the mountains that came partially to the eye, each assisted to raise the solemnity of Emily's feelings into awe: she saw only images of gloomy grandeur, or of dreadful sublimity, around her; other images, equally gloomy, and equally terrible, gleamed on her imagination. She was going she scarcely knew whither, under the dominion of a person from whose arbitrary disposition she had already suffered so much; to marry, perhaps, a man who possessed neither her affection nor esteem; or to endure, beyond the hope of succour, whatever punishment revenge, and that Italian revenge, might dictate. The more she considered what might be the motive of the journey, the more she became convinced that it was for the purpose of concluding her nuptials with Count Morano, with the secrecy which her resolute resistance had made necessary to the honour, if not to the safety, of Montoni. From the deep solitudes into which she was emerging, and from the gloomy castle of which she had heard some mysterious hints, her sick heart recoiled in despair, and she experienced that, though her mind was already occupied by peculiar distress, it was still alive to the influence of new and local circumstance; why else did she shudder at the image of this desolate castle?

As the travellers still ascended among the pine-forests, steep rose over steep, the mountains seemed to multiply as they went, and what was the summit of one eminence proved to be only the base of another. At length they reached a little plain, where the drivers stopped to rest the mules, when a scene of such extent and magnificence opened below, as drew even from Madame Montoni a note of admiration. Emily lost for a moment her sorrows in the immensity of nature. Beyond the amphitheatre of mountains that stretched below, whose tops appeared as numerous almost as the waves of the sea, and whose feet were concealed by the forests—extended the *campagna* of Italy, where cities and rivers and woods, and all the glow of cultivation, were mingled in gay confusion. The Adriatic bounded the horizon, into which the Po and the Brenta, after winding through the whole extent of the landscape, poured their fruitful waves. Emily gazed long on the splendours of the world she

was quitting, of which the whole magnificence seemed thus given to her sight only to increase her regret on leaving it: for her, Valancourt alone was in that world; to him alone her heart turned, and for him alone fell her bitter tears.

From this sublime scene the travellers continued to ascend among the pines, till they entered a narrow pass of the mountains, which shut out every feature of the distant country, and in its stead exhibited only tremendous crags impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared except here and there the trunk and scathed branches of an oak, that hung nearly headlong from the rock into which its strong roots had fastened. This pass, which led into the heart of the Apennine, at length opened to day, and a scene of mountains stretched in long perspective, as wild as any the travellers had yet passed. Still vast pine-forests hung upon their base, and crowned the ridgy precipice that rose perpendicularly from the vale, while, above, the rolling mists caught the sunbeams, and touched their cliffs with all the magical colouring of light and shade. The scene seemed perpetually changing, and its features to assume new forms, as the winding road brought them to the eye in different attitudes; while the shifting vapours, now partially concealing their minuter beauties, and now illuminating them with splendid tints, assisted the illusions of the sight.

Though the deep valleys between these mountains were for the most part clothed with pines, sometimes an abrupt opening presented a perspective of only barren rocks, with a cataract flashing from their summit among broken cliffs, till its waters, reaching the bottom, foamed along with louder fury; and sometimes pastoral scenes exhibited their "green delights" in the narrow vales, smiling amid surrounding horror. There herds and flocks of goats and sheep browsing under the shade of hanging woods, and the shepherd's little cabin reared on the margin of a clear stream, presented a sweet picture of repose.

Wild and romantic as were these scenes, their character had far less of the sublime than had those of the Alps which guard the entrance of Italy. Emily was often elevated, but seldom felt those emotions of indescribable awe which she had so continually experienced in her passage over the Alps.

Towards the close of day the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east a vista opened, and exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed

with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley; but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below.

"There," said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, "is Udolpho."

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those, too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity; and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and soon after reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice: but the gloom that overspread it allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know that it was vast, ancient, and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers crowned by overhanging turrets embattled, where, in-

stead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis surmounting the gates: from these the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war. Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening.

While Emily gazed with awe upon the scene, footsteps were heard within the gates, and the undrawing of bolts; after which an ancient servant of the castle appeared, forcing back the huge folds of the portal to admit his lord. As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sank, and she seemed as if she was going into her prison; the gloomy court into which she passed, served to confirm the idea; and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors than her reason could justify.

Another gate delivered them into the second court, grass-grown and more wild than the first, where, as she surveyed through the twilight its desolation—its lofty walls overtopped with bryony, moss, and nightshade, and the embattled towers that rose above—long suffering and murder came to her thoughts. One of those instantaneous and unaccountable convictions, which sometimes conquer even strong minds, impressed her with its horror. The sentiment was not diminished when she entered an extensive Gothic hall, obscured by the gloom of evening, which a light glimmering at a distance through a long perspective of arches only rendered more striking. As a servant brought the lamp nearer, partial gleams fell upon the pillars and the pointed arches, forming a strong contrast with their shadows that stretched along the pavement and the walls.

The sudden journey of Montoni had prevented his people from making any other preparations for his reception than could be had in the short interval since the arrival of the servant who had been sent forward from Venice; and this, in some measure, may account for the air of extreme desolation that everywhere appeared.

The servant who came to light Montoni bowed in silence, and the muscles of his countenance relaxed with no symptom of joy. Montoni noticed the salutation by a slight motion of his hand, and passed on; while his lady, following and looking round with a

degree of surprise and discontent which she seemed fearful of expressing, and Emily, surveying the extent and grandeur of the hall in timid wonder, approached a marble staircase. The arches here opened to a lofty vault, from the centre of which hung a tripod lamp which a servant was hastily lighting; and the rich fretwork of the roof, a corridor leading into several upper apartments, and a painted window stretching nearly from the pavement to the ceiling of the hall, became gradually visible.

Having crossed the foot of the staircase and passed through an ante-room, they entered a spacious apartment, whose walls, wainscoted with black larch-wood, the growth of the neighbouring mountains, were scarcely distinguishable from darkness itself.

"Bring more light," said Montoni as he entered.

The servant setting down his lamp, was withdrawing to obey him; when Madame Montoni observing that the evening air of this mountainous region was cold, and that she should like a fire, Montoni ordered that wood might be brought.

While he paced the room with thoughtful steps, and Madame Montoni sat silently on a couch at the upper end of it waiting till the servant returned, Emily was observing the singular solemnity and desolation of the apartment, viewed as it now was by the glimmer of the single lamp, placed near a large Venetian mirror that duskily reflected the scene, with the tall figure of Montoni passing slowly along, his arms folded, and his countenance shaded by the plume that waved in his hat.

From the contemplation of this scene, Emily's mind proceeded to the apprehension of what she might suffer in it, till the remembrance of Valancourt, far, far distant! came to her heart, and softened it into sorrow. A heavy sigh escaped her: but trying to conceal her tears, she walked away to one of the high windows that opened upon the ramparts, below which spread the woods she had passed in her approach to the castle. But the night shade sat deeply on the mountains beyond, and their indented outline alone could be faintly traced on the horizon, where a red streak yet glimmered in the west. The valley between was sunk in darkness.

The scene within, upon which Emily turned on the opening of the door, was scarcely less gloomy. The old servant who had received them at the gates now entered, bending under a load of pine branches, while two of Montoni's Venetian servants followed with lights.

"Your *Excellenza* is welcome to the castle," said the old man,

as he raised himself from the hearth, where he had laid the wood; "it has been a lonely place a long while; but you will excuse it, signor, knowing we had but short notice. It is near two years, come next feast of St. Mark, since your *Excellenza* was within these walls."

"You have a good memory, old Carlo," said Montoni; "it is thereabout; and how hast thou contrived to live so long?"

"A-well-a-day, sir, with much ado; the cold winds that blow through the castle in winter are almost too much for me; and I thought sometimes of asking your *Excellenza* to let me leave the mountains, and go down into the lowlands. But I don't know how it is—I am loath to quit these old walls I have lived in so long."

"Well, how have you gone on in the castle, since I left it?" said Montoni.

"Why, much as usual, signor; only it wants a good deal of repairing. There is the north tower—some of the battlements have tumbled down, and had like one day to have knocked my poor wife (God rest her soul!) on the head. Your *Excellenza* must know——"

"Well, but the repairs," interrupted Montoni.

"Ay, the repairs," said Carlo: "a part of the roof of the great hall has fallen in, and all the winds from the mountains rushed through it last winter, and whistled through the whole castle, so that there was no keeping one's self warm, be where one would. There my wife and I used to sit shivering over a great fire in one corner of the little hall, ready to die with cold, and——"

"But there are no more repairs wanted," said Montoni impatiently.

"O Lord! your *Excellenza*, yes—the wall of the rampart has tumbled down in three places; then, the stairs that lead to the west gallery have been a long time so bad that it is dangerous to go up them: and the passage leading to the great oak chamber, that overhangs the north rampart—one night last winter I ventured to go there by myself, and your *Excellenza*——"

"Well, well, enough of this," said Montoni with quickness: "I will talk more with thee to-morrow."

The fire was now lighted; Carlo swept the hearth, placed chairs, wiped the dust from a large marble table that stood near it, and then left the room.

Montoni and his family drew round the fire. Madame Montoni made several attempts at conversation, but his sullen answers

repulsed her, while Emily sat endeavouring to acquire courage enough to speak to him. At length, in a tremulous voice, she said, "May I ask, sir, the motive of this sudden journey?" After a long pause she recovered sufficient courage to repeat the question.

"It does not suit me to answer inquiries," said Montoni, "nor does it become you to make them; time may unfold them all; but I desire I may be no further harassed, and I recommend it to you to retire to your chamber, and to endeavour to adopt a more rational conduct than that of yielding to fancies, and to a sensibility which, to call it by the gentlest name, is only a weakness."

Emily rose to withdraw. "Good night, madame," said she to her aunt with an assumed composure that could not disguise her emotion.

"Good night, my dear," said Madame Montoni in a tone of kindness which her niece had never before heard from her; and the unexpected endearment brought tears to Emily's eyes. She curtsied to Montoni, and was retiring. "But you do not know the way to your chamber," said her aunt. Montoni called the servant, who waited in the ante-room, and bade him send Madame Montoni's woman; with whom, in a few minutes, Emily withdrew.

"Do you know which is my room?" said she to Annette, as they crossed the hall.

"Yes, I believe I do, ma'amselle; but this is such a strange rambling place! I have been lost in it already; they call it the double chamber over the south rampart, and I went up this great staircase to it. My lady's room is at the other end of the castle."

Emily ascended the marble staircase, and came to the corridor, as they passed through which Annette resumed her chat. "What a wild lonely place this is, ma'am! I shall be quite frightened to live in it. How often and often have I wished myself in France again! I little thought, when I came with my lady to see the world, that I should ever be shut up in such a place as this, or I would never have left my own country! This way, ma'amselle, down this turning. I can almost believe in giants again, and such-like, for this is just like one of their castles; and some night or other, I suppose, I shall see fairies too hopping about in the great old hall, that looks more like a church, with its huge pillars, than anything else."

"Yes," said Emily smiling, and glad to escape from more serious thought, "if we come to the corridor about midnight and

look down into the hall, we shall certainly see it illuminated with a thousand lamps, and the fairies tripping in gay circles to the sound of delicious music; for it is in such places as this, you know, that they come to hold their revels. But I am afraid, Annette, you will not be able to pay the necessary penance for such a sight: and if once they hear your voice the whole scene will vanish in an instant."

"Oh! if you will bear me company, ma'amselle, I will come to the corridor this very night, and I promise you I will hold my tongue; it shall not be my fault if the show vanishes.—But do you think they will come?"

"I cannot promise that with certainty, but I will venture to say it will not be your fault if the enchantment should vanish."

"Well, ma'amselle, that is saying more than I expected of you: but I am not so much afraid of fairies as of ghosts; and they say there are a plentiful many of them about the castle; now I should be frightened to death if I should chance to see any of them. But hush, ma'amselle, walk softly! I have thought several times something passed by me."

"Ridiculous!" said Emily; "you must not indulge such fancies."

"O ma'am! they are not fancies, for aught I know; Benedetto says these dismal galleries and halls are fit for nothing but ghosts to live in; and I verily believe, if I *live* long in them, I shall turn to one myself!"

"I hope," said Emily, "you will not suffer Signor Montoni to hear of these weak fears; they would highly displease him."

"What, you know then, ma'amselle, all about it!" rejoined Annette. "No, no, I do know better than to do so; though, if the signor can sleep sound, nobody else in the castle has any right to lie awake, I am sure." Emily did not appear to notice this remark.

"Down this passage, ma'amselle; this leads to a back staircase. Oh! if I see anything, I shall be frightened out of my wits!"

"That will scarcely be possible," said Emily smiling, as she followed the winding of the passage which opened into another gallery; and then, Annette perceiving that she had missed her way while she had been so eloquently haranguing on ghosts and fairies, wandered about through other passages and galleries, till at length, frightened by their intricacies and desolation, she called aloud for assistance: but they were beyond the hearing of the servants, who were on the other side of the castle, and Emily now opened the door of a chamber on the left.

"Oh! do not go in there, ma'amselle," said Annette, "you will only lose yourself further."

"Bring the light forward," said Emily, "we may possibly find our way through these rooms."

Annette stood at the door in an attitude of hesitation, with the light held up to show the chamber, but the feeble rays spread through not half of it. "Why do you hesitate?" said Emily; "let me see whither this room leads."

Annette advanced reluctantly. It opened into a suite of spacious and ancient apartments, some of which were hung with tapestry, and others wainscoted with cedar and black larch-wood. What furniture there was, seemed to be almost as old as the rooms, and retained an appearance of grandeur, though covered with dust, and dropping to pieces with damp and with age.

"How cold these rooms are, ma'amselle!" said Annette: "nobody has lived in them for many, many years, they say. Do let us go."

"They may open upon the great staircase, perhaps," said Emily, passing on till she came to a chamber hung with pictures, and took the light to examine that of a soldier on horseback in a field of battle.—He was darting his spear upon a man who lay under the feet of the horse, and who held up one hand in a supplicating attitude. The soldier, whose beaver was up, regarded him with a look of vengeance, and his countenance, with that expression, struck Emily as resembling Montoni. She shuddered, and turned from it. Passing the light hastily over several other pictures, she came to one concealed by a veil of black silk. The singularity of the circumstance struck her, and she stopped before it, wishing to remove the veil, and examine what could thus carefully be concealed, but somewhat wanting courage. "Holy Virgin! what can this mean?" exclaimed Annette. "This is surely the picture they told me of at Venice."

"What picture?" said Emily. "Why, a picture—a picture," replied Annette hesitatingly, "—but I never could make out exactly what it was about either."

"Remove the veil, Annette."

"What! I, ma'amselle!—I! not for the world!" Emily, turning round, saw Annette's countenance grow pale. "And pray what have you heard of this picture to terrify you so, my good girl?" said she.—"Nothing, ma'amselle: I have heard nothing, only let us find our way out."

"Certainly, but I wish first to examine the picture; take the light, Annette, while I lift the veil." Annette took the light, and immediately walked away with it, disregarding Emily's call to stay, who, not choosing to be left alone in the dark chamber, at length followed her. "What is the reason of this, Annette?" said Emily, when she overtook her; "what have you heard concerning that picture, which makes you so unwilling to stay when I bid you?"

"I don't know what is the reason, ma'amselle," replied Annette, "nor anything about the picture; only I have heard there is something very dreadful belonging to it—and that it has been covered up in black *ever since*—and that nobody has looked at it for a great many years—and it somehow has to do with the owner of this castle before Signor Montoni came to the possession of it—and——"

"Well, Annette," said Emily, smiling, "I perceive it is as you say—that you know nothing about the picture."

"No, nothing, indeed, ma'amselle, for they made me promise never to tell:—but——"

"Well," said Emily, who perceived that she was struggling between her inclination to reveal a secret and her apprehension for the consequence, "I will inquire no further——"

"No, pray, ma'am, do not."

"Lest you should tell all," interrupted Emily.

Annette blushed, and Emily smiled, and they passed on to the extremity of this suite of apartments, and found themselves, after some further perplexity, once more at the top of the marble staircase, where Annette left Emily, while she went to call one of the servants of the castle to show them to the chamber for which they had been seeking.

While she was absent, Emily's thoughts returned to the picture; an unwillingness to tamper with the integrity of a servant had checked her inquiries on this subject, as well as concerning some alarming hints which Annette had dropped respecting Montoni: though her curiosity was entirely awakened, and she had perceived that her questions might easily be answered. She was now, however, inclined to go back to the apartment and examine the picture; but the loneliness of the hour and of the place, with the melancholy silence that reigned around her, conspired with a certain degree of awe, excited by the mystery attending this picture, to prevent her. She determined, however, when daylight should have reanimated her spirits, to go thither and remove the veil. As she leaned from the corridor over the

staircase, and her eyes wandered round, she again observed with wonder, the vast strength of the walls, now somewhat decayed and the pillars of solid marble that rose from the hall and supported the roof.

A servant now appeared with Annette, and conducted Emily to her chamber, which was in a remote part of the castle, and at the very end of the corridor from whence the suite of apartments opened through which they had been wandering. The lonely aspect of her room made Emily unwilling that Annette should leave her immediately, and the dampness of it chilled her with more than fear. She begged Caterina, the servant of the castle, to bring some wood and light a fire.

"Ay, lady, it's many a year since a fire was lighted here," said Caterina.

"You need not tell us that, good woman," said Annette; "every room in the castle feels like a well. I wonder how you contrive to live here: for my part, I wish I was at Venice again." Emily waved her hand for Caterina to fetch the wood.

"I wonder, ma'am, why they call this the double chamber," said Annette, while Emily surveyed it in silence, and saw that it was lofty and spacious like the others she had seen, and, like many of them, too, had its walls lined with dark larch-wood. The bed and other furniture were very ancient, and had an air of gloomy grandeur, like all she had seen in the castle. One of the high casements, which she opened, overlooked a rampart, but the view beyond was hid in darkness.

In the presence of Annette, Emily tried to support her spirits, and to restrain the tears which every now and then came to her eyes. She wished much to inquire when Count Morano was expected at the castle; but an unwillingness to ask unnecessary questions, and to mention family concerns to a servant, withheld her. Meanwhile, Annette's thoughts were engaged upon another subject: she dearly loved the marvellous, and had heard of a circumstance, connected with the castle, that highly gratified this taste. Having been enjoined not to mention it, her inclination to tell it was so strong that she was every instant on the point of speaking what she had heard; such a strange circumstance, too, and to be obliged to conceal it was a severe punishment; but she knew that Montoni might impose one much severer, and she feared to incur it by offending him.

Caterina now brought the wood, and its bright blaze dispelled for a while the gloom of her chamber. She told Annette that her lady had inquired for her; and Emily was once again left

to her own reflections. Her heart was not yet hardened against the stern manners of Montoni, and she was nearly as much shocked now, as she had been when she first witnessed them. The tenderness and affection to which she had been accustomed till she lost her parents, had made her particularly sensible to any degree of unkindness, and such a reverse as this no apprehension had prepared her to support.

To call off her attention from subjects that pressed heavily on her spirits, she rose and again examined her room and its furniture. As she walked around it she passed a door that was not quite shut; and perceiving that it was not the one through which she entered, she brought the light forward to discover whither it led. She opened it, and, going forward, had nearly fallen down a steep narrow staircase that wound from it, between two stone walls. She wished to know to what it led, and was the more anxious since it communicated so immediately with her apartment; but in the present state of her spirits she wanted courage to venture into the darkness alone. Closing the door, therefore, she endeavoured to fasten it, but upon further examination perceived that it had no bolts on the chamber side, though it had two on the other. By placing a heavy chair against it, she in some measure remedied the defect: yet she was still alarmed at the thought of sleeping in this remote room alone, with a door opening she knew not whither, and which could not be perfectly fastened on the inside. Sometimes she wished to entreat of Madame Montoni that Annette might have leave to remain with her all night; but was deterred by an apprehension of betraying what would be thought childish fears and by an unwillingness to increase the apt terrors of Annette.

Her gloomy reflections were soon after interrupted by a foot-step in the corridor, and she was glad to see Annette enter with some supper sent by Madame Montoni. Having a table near the fire, she made the good girl sit down and sup with her; and when their little repast was over, Annette, encouraged by her kindness, and stirring the wood into a blaze, drew her chair upon the hearth, nearer to Emily, and said, "Did you ever hear, ma'amselle, of the strange accident that made the signor lord of this castle?"

"What wonderful story have you now to tell?" said Emily, concealing the curiosity occasioned by the mysterious hints she had formerly heard on that subject.

"I have heard all about it, ma'amselle," said Annette, looking round the chamber and drawing closer to Emily; "Benedetto

told me as we travelled together: says he, 'Annette, you don't know about this castle here, that we are going to?' 'No,' says I, 'Mr. Benedetto, pray what do you know?' But, ma'amselle, you can keep a secret, or I would not tell you for the world; for I promised néver to tell, and they say that the signor does not like to have it talked of."

"If you promise to keep this secret," said Emily, "you do right not to mention it."

Annette paused a moment, and then said, "Oh, but to you, ma'amselle, to you I may tell it safely, I know."

Emily smiled: "I certainly shall keep it as faithful as yourself, Annette."

Annette replied very gravely, that would do, and proceeded. "This castle, you must know, ma'amselle, is very old, and very strong, and has stood out many sieges as they say. Now it was not Signor Montoni's always, nor his father's; no, by some law or other, it was to come to the signor if the lady died unmarried."

"What lady?" said Emily.

"I am not come to that yet," replied Annette: "it is the lady I am going to tell you about, ma'amselle: but, as I was saying, this lady lived in the castle, and had everything very grand about her, as you may suppose, ma'amselle. The signor used often to come to see her, and was in love with her, and offered to marry her: for, though he was somehow related, that did not signify. But she was in love with somebody else, and would not have him, which made him very angry, as they say; and you know, ma'amselle, what an ill-looking gentleman he is when he is angry. Perhaps she saw him in a passion, and therefore would not have him. But, as I was saying, she was very melancholy and unhappy, and all that, for a long time, and—— Holy Virgin! what noise is that? did not you hear a sound, ma'amselle?"

"It was only the wind," said Emily; "but do come to the end of your story."

"As I was saying—oh, where was I?—as I was saying—she was very melancholy and unhappy a long while, and used to walk about upon the terrace, there, under the windows, by herself, and cry so! it would have done your heart good to hear her. That is—I don't mean good, but it would have made you cry too, as they tell me."

"Well, but, Annette, do tell me the substance of your tale."

"All in good time, ma'am: all this I heard before at Venice, but what is to come I never heard till to-day. This happened a great many years ago, when Signor Montoni was quite a young

man. The lady—they called her Signora Laurentini, was very handsome, but she used to be in great passions too, sometimes, as well as the signor. Finding he could not make her listen to him—what does he do, but leave the castle, and never comes near it for a long time! but it was all one to her; she was just as unhappy whether he was here or not, till one evening—— Holy St. Peter! ma'amselle," cried Annette, "look at that lamp, see how blue it burns!" She looked fearfully round the chamber. "Ridiculous girl!" said Emily, "why will you indulge those fancies? Pray let me hear the end of your story, I am weary."

Annette still kept her eyes on the lamp, and proceeded in a lower voice. "It was one evening, they say, at the latter end of the year, it might be about the middle of September, I suppose, or the beginning of October; nay, for that matter, it might be November, for that, too, is the latter end of the year; but that I cannot say for certain, because they did not tell me for certain, themselves. However, it was at the latter end of the year, this grand lady walked out of the castle into the woods below, as she had often done before, all alone, only her maid was with her. The wind blew cold, and strewed the leaves about, and whistled dismally among those great old chestnut-trees that we passed, ma'amselle, as we came to the castle—for Benedetto showed me the trees as he was talking—the wind blew cold, and her woman would have persuaded her to return: but all would not do, for she was fond of walking in the woods at evening time, and if the leaves were falling about her, so much the better.

"Well, they saw her go down among the woods, but night came, and she did not return: ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock came, and no lady! Well, the servants thought, to be sure, some accident had befallen her, and they went out to seek her. They searched all night long, but could not find her, or any trace of her: and from that day to this, ma'amselle, she has never been heard of."

"Is this true, Annette?" said Emily in much surprise.

"True, ma'am!" said Annette with a look of horror, "yes, it is true, indeed. But they do say," she added, lowering her voice, "they do say, that the signora has been seen several times since walking in the woods and about the castle in the night: several of the old servants, who remained here some time after, declare they saw her; and since then, she has been seen by some of the vassals, who have happened to be in the castle at night. Carlo the old steward could tell such things, they say, if he would!"

"How contradictory is this, Annette!" said Emily, "you say nothing has been since known of her, and yet she has been seen!"

"But all this was told me for a great secret," rejoined Annette, without noticing the remark, "and I am sure, ma'am, you would not hurt either me or Benedetto, so much as to go and tell it again." Emily remained silent, and Annette repeated her last sentence.

"You have nothing to fear from my indiscretion," replied Emily: "and let me advise you, my good Annette, be discreet yourself, and never mention what you have just told me to any other person. Signor Montoni, as you say, may be angry, if he hears of it, but what inquiries were made concerning the lady?"

"Oh, a great deal, indeed, ma'amselle, for the signor laid claim to the castle directly, as being the next heir; and they said, that is, the judges, or the senators, or somebody of that sort, said, he could not take possession of it till so many years were gone by, and then, if after all the lady could not be found, why, she would be as good as dead, and the castle would be his own; and so it is his own. But the story went round, and many strange reports were spread, so very strange, ma'amselle, that I shall not tell them."

"That is stranger still, Annette," said Emily smiling, and rousing herself from her reverie. "But when Signora Laurentini was afterwards seen in the castle, did nobody speak to her?"

"Speak—speak to her!" cried Annette with a look of terror; "no, to be sure."

"And why not?" rejoined Emily, willing to hear further.

"Holy Mother! speak to a spirit!"

"But what reason had they to conclude it was a spirit, unless they had approached and spoken to it?"

"Oh, ma'amselle, I cannot tell. How can you ask such shocking questions? But nobody ever saw it come in or go out of the castle: and it was in one place now, and the next minute in quite another part of the castle: and then it never spoke, and if it was alive, what should it do in the castle if it never spoke? Several parts of the castle had never been gone into since, they say for that very reason."

"What, because it never spoke?" said Emily, trying to laugh away the fears that began to steal upon her.

"No, ma'amselle, no," replied Annette rather angrily; "but because something has been seen there. They say, too, there is

an old chapel adjoining the west side of the castle, where any time at midnight you may hear such groans!—it makes one shudder to think of them:—and strange sights have been seen there——”

“Pr’thee, Annette, no more of these silly tales,” said Emily.

“Silly tales, ma’amselle! Oh, but I will tell you one story about this, if you please, that Caterina told me. It was one cold winter’s night that Caterina (she often came to the castle then, she says, to keep old Carlo and his wife company, and so he recommended her afterwards to the signor, and she has lived here ever since) —Caterina was sitting with them in the little hall: says Carlo, ‘I wish we had some of those figs to roast, that lie in the store-closet, but it is a long way off, and I am loath to fetch them; do, Caterina,’ says he, ‘for you are young and nimble, do bring us some, the fire is in nice trim for roasting them: they lie,’ says he, ‘in such a corner of the store-room, at the end of the north gallery; here, take the lamp,’ says he, ‘and mind, as you go up the great staircase, that the wind through the roof does not blow it out.’ So with that Caterina took the lamp—— Hush! ma’amselle, I surely heard a noise.”

Emily, whom Annette had now infected with her own terrors, listened attentively; but everything was still, and Annette proceeded:

“Caterina went to the north gallery, that is, the wide gallery we passed, ma’am, before we came to the corridor, here. As she went with the lamp in her hand, thinking of nothing at all—— There, again!” cried Annette suddenly——“I heard it again! it was not fancy, ma’amselle!”

“Hush!” said Emily, trembling. They listened, and continuing to sit quite still, Emily heard a slow knocking against the wall. It came repeatedly. Annette then screamed loudly, and the chamber door slowly opened. It was Caterina, come to tell Annette that her lady wanted her. Emily, though she now perceived who it was, could not immediately overcome her terror; while Annette, half laughing, half crying, scolded Caterina heartily for thus alarming them: and was also terrified lest what she had told had been overheard. Emily, whose mind was deeply impressed by the chief circumstance of Annette’s relation, was unwilling to be left alone in the present state of her spirits; but to avoid offending Madame Montoni and betraying her own weakness, she struggled to overcome the illusions of fear, and dismissed Annette for the night.

When she was alone, her thoughts recurred to the strange

history of Signora Laurentini, and then to her own strange situation, in the wild and solitary mountains of a foreign country, in the castle and the power of a man to whom only a few preceding months she was an entire stranger; who had already exercised an usurped authority over her, and whose character she now regarded with a degree of terror apparently justified by the fears of others. She knew that he had invention equal to the conception, and talents to the execution, of any project, and she greatly feared he had a heart too void of feeling to oppose the perpetration of whatever his interest might suggest. She had long observed the unhappiness of Madame Montoni, and had often been witness to the stern and contemptuous behaviour she received from her husband. To these circumstances, which conspired to give her just cause for alarm, were now added those thousand nameless terrors which exist only in active imaginations, and which set reason and examination equally at defiance.

Emily remembered all that Valancourt had told her, on the eve of her departure from Languedoc, respecting Montoni, and all that he had said to dissuade her from venturing on the journey. His fears had often since appeared to her prophetic—now they seemed confirmed. Her heart, as it gave her back the image of Valancourt, mourned in vain regret; but reason soon came with a consolation, which, though feeble at first, acquired vigour from reflection. She considered that, whatever might be her sufferings, she had withheld from involving him in misfortune, and that whatever her future sorrows could be, she was at least free from self-reproach.

Her melancholy was assisted by the hollow sighings of the wind along the corridor and round the castle. The cheerful blaze of the wood had long been extinguished, and she sat with her eyes fixed on the dying embers, till a loud gust, that swept through the corridor, and shook the doors and casements, alarmed her; for its violence had moved the chair she had placed as a fastening, and the door leading to the private staircase stood half open. Her curiosity and her fears were again awakened. She took the lamp to the top of the steps, and stood hesitating whether to go down; but again the profound stillness and the gloom of the place awed her: and determining to inquire further when daylight might assist the search, she closed the door, and placed against it a stronger guard.

She now retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the table; but its gloomy light, instead of dispelling her fear, assisted it; for, by its uncertain rays, she almost fancied she saw shapes

flit past her curtains, and glide into the remote obscurity of her chamber. The castle clock struck one before she closed her eyes to sleep.

CHAPTER XIX

I think it is the weakness of mine eyes,
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me!

Julius Cæsar.

DAYLIGHT dispelled from Emily's mind the glooms of superstition, but not those of apprehension. The Count Morano was the first image that occurred to her waking thoughts, and then came a train of anticipated evils which she could neither conquer nor avoid. She rose and, to relieve her mind from the busy ideas that tormented it, compelled herself to notice external objects. From her casement she looked out upon the wild grandeur of the scene, closed nearly on all sides by Alpine steeps, whose tops peeping over each other faded from the eye in misty hues, while the promontories below were dark with woods that swept down to their base, and stretched along the narrow valleys. The rich pomp of these woods was particularly delightful to Emily: and she viewed with astonishment the fortifications of the castle spreading along a vast extent of rock, and now partly in decay, the grandeur of the ramparts below, and the towers and battlements and various features of the fabric above. From these her sight wandered over the cliffs and woods into the valley, along which foamed a broad and rapid stream, seen falling among the crags of an opposite mountain, now flashing in the sunbeams, and now shadowed by overarching pines, till it was entirely concealed by their thick foliage. Again it burst from beneath this darkness in one broad sheet of foam, and fell thundering into the vale. Nearer, towards the west, opened the mountain vista which Emily had viewed with such sublime emotion on her approach to the castle: a thin dusky vapour, that rose from the valley, overspread its features with a sweet obscurity. As this ascended and caught the sunbeams it kindled into a crimson tint, and touched with exquisite beauty the woods and cliffs over which it passed to the summit of the mountains; then, as the veil drew up, it was delightful to watch the gleaming objects that progressively disclosed themselves in the valley—the green turf—dark woods—little rocky recesses—a few peasants' huts—

the foaming stream—a herd of cattle, and various images of pastoral beauty. Then the pine-forests brightened, and then the broad breast of the mountains, till at length the mist settled round their summit, touching them with a ruddy glow. The features of the vista now appeared distinctly, and the broad, deep shadows that fell from the lower cliffs gave strong effect to the streaming splendour above; while the mountains, gradually sinking in the perspective, appeared to shelve into the Adriatic Sea, for such Emily imagined to be the gleam of bluish light that terminated the view.

Thus she endeavoured to amuse her fancy, and was not unsuccessful. The breezy freshness of the morning, too, revived her. She raised her thoughts in prayer, which she felt always most disposed to do when viewing the sublimity of nature, and her mind recovered its strength.

When she turned from the casement, her eyes glanced upon the door she had so carefully guarded on the preceding night, and she now determined to examine whither it led; but on advancing to remove the chairs, she perceived that they were already moved a little way. Her surprise cannot be easily imagined, when in the next minute she perceived that the door was fastened. She felt as if she had seen an apparition. The door of the corridor was locked as she had left it, but this door, which could be secured only on the outside, must have been bolted during the night. She became seriously uneasy at the thought of sleeping again in a chamber thus liable to intrusion, so remote too as it was from the family, and she determined to mention the circumstance to Madame Montoni, and to request a change.

After some perplexity she found her way into the great hall, and to the room which she had left on the preceding night, where breakfast was spread, and her aunt was alone; for Montoni had been walking over the environs of the castle, examining the condition of its fortifications, and talking for some time with Carlo. Emily observed that her aunt had been weeping, and her heart softened towards her with an affection that showed itself in her manner rather than in words, while she carefully avoided the appearance of having noticed that she was unhappy. She seized the opportunity of Montoni's absence to mention the circumstance of the door, to request that she might be allowed another apartment, and to inquire again concerning the occasion of their sudden journey. On the first subject her aunt referred her to Montoni, positively refusing to interfere in the affair; on the last she professed utter ignorance.

Emily then, with a wish of making her aunt more reconciled to her situation, praised the grandeur of the castle and the surrounding scenery, and endeavoured to soften every unpleasant circumstance attending it. But though misfortune had somewhat conquered the asperity of Madame Montoni's temper and, by increasing her cares for herself, had taught her to feel in some degree for others, the capricious love of rule, which nature had planted and habit had nourished in her heart, was not subdued. She could not now deny herself the gratification of tyrannizing over the innocent and helpless Emily, by attempting to ridicule the taste she could not feel.

Her satirical discourse was, however, interrupted by the entrance of Montoni, and her countenance immediately assumed a mingled expression of fear and resentment, while he seated himself at the breakfast table, as if unconscious of there being any person but himself in the room.

Emily, as she observed him in silence, saw that his countenance was darker and sterner than usual. "Oh, could I know," said she to herself, "what passes in that mind; could I know the thoughts that are known there, I should no longer be condemned to this torturing suspense!" Their breakfast passed in silence, till Emily ventured to request that another apartment might be allotted to her, and related the circumstance which made her wish it.

"I have no time to attend to these idle whims," said Montoni; "that chamber was prepared for you, and you must rest contented with it. It is not probable that any person would take the trouble of going to that remote staircase for the purpose of fastening a door. If it was not fastened when you entered the chamber, the wind, perhaps, shook the door and made the bolts slide. But I know not why I should undertake to account for so trifling an occurrence."

This explanation was by no means satisfactory to Emily, who had observed that the bolts were rusted, and consequently could not be thus easily moved; but she forbore to say so, and repeated her request.

"If you will not release yourself from the slavery of these fears," said Montoni sternly, "at least forbear to torment others by the mention of them. Conquer such whims, and endeavour to strengthen your mind. No existence is more contemptible than that which is embittered by fear." As he said this, his eye glanced upon Madame Montoni, who coloured highly, but was still silent. Emily, wounded and disappointed, thought her

fears were, in this instance, too reasonable to deserve ridicule; but perceiving that, however they might oppress her, she must endure them, she tried to withdraw her attention from the subject.

Carlo soon after entered with some fruit.

"Your *Excellenza* is tired after your long ramble," said he, as he set the fruit upon the table; "but you have more to see after breakfast. There is a place in the vaulted passage leading to——"

Montoni frowned upon him, and waved his hand for him to leave the room. Carlo stopped, looked down, and then added, as he advanced to the breakfast-table, and took up the basket of fruit:

"I made bold, your *Excellenza*, to bring some cherries here, for my honoured lady and my young mistress. Will your ladyship taste them, madame?" said Carlo, presenting the basket; "they are very fine ones, though I gathered them myself, and from an old tree that catches all the south sun; they are as big as plums, your ladyship."

"Very well, old Carlo," said Madame Montoni; "I am obliged to you."

"And the young signora, too, she may like some of them?" rejoined Carlo, turning with the basket to Emily; "it will do me good to see her eat some."

"Thank you, Carlo," said Emily, taking some cherries, and smiling kindly.

"Come, come," said Montoni impatiently, "enough of this. Leave the room, but be in waiting: I shall want you presently."

Carlo obeyed, and Montoni soon after went out to examine further into the state of the castle; while Emily remained with her aunt, patiently enduring her ill humour, and endeavouring with much sweetness, to soothe her affliction, instead of resenting its effect.

When Madame Montoni retired to her dressing-room, Emily endeavoured to amuse herself by a view of the castle. Through a folding-door she passed from the great hall to the ramparts, which extended along the brow of the precipice round three sides of the edifice; the fourth was guarded by the high walls of the courts, and by the gateway through which she had passed on the preceding evening. The grandeur of the broad ramparts, and the changing scenery they overlooked, excited her high admiration; for the extent of the terraces allowed the features of the country to be seen in such various points of view that they

appeared to form new landscapes. She often paused to examine the Gothic magnificence of Udolpho, its proud irregularity, its lofty towers and battlements, its high-arched casements, and its slender watch-tower, perched upon the corners of turrets. Then she would lean on the wall of the terrace, and, shuddering, measure with her eye the precipice below till the dark summits of the woods arrested it. Wherever she turned, appeared mountain-tops, forests of pine, and narrow glens opening among the Apennines, and retiring from the sight into inaccessible regions.

While she thus leaned, Montoni, followed by two men, appeared ascending a winding path cut in the rock below. He stopped upon a cliff, and, pointing to the ramparts, turned to his followers, and talked with much eagerness of gesticulation.—Emily perceived that one of these men was Carlo; the other was in the dress of a peasant, and he alone seemed to be receiving the directions of Montoni.

She withdrew from the walls, and pursued her walk, till she heard at a distance the sound of carriage-wheels, and then the loud bell of the portal, when it instantly occurred to her that Count Morano was arrived. As she hastily passed the folding-doors from the terrace towards her own apartment, several persons entered the hall by an opposite door. She saw them at the extremities of the arcades, and immediately retreated; but the agitation of her spirits, and the extent and duskiness of the hall, had prevented her from distinguishing the persons of the strangers. Her fears, however, had but one object, and they called up that object to her fancy; she believed that she had seen Count Morano.

When she thought that they had passed the hall, she ventured again to the door, and proceeded unobserved to her room, where she remained agitated with apprehensions and listening to every distant sound. At length, hearing voices on the rampart, she hastened to her window, and observed Montoni with Signor Cavigni walking below, conversing earnestly, and often stopping and turning towards each other, at which time their discourse seemed to be uncommonly interesting.

Of the several persons who had appeared in the hall, here was Cavigni alone: but Emily's alarm was soon after heightened by the steps of some one in the corridor, who, she apprehended, brought a message from the count. In the next moment Annette appeared.

"Ah! ma'amselle," said she, "here is the Signor Cavigni

arrived! I am sure I rejoiced to see a Christian person in this place; and then he is so good-natured too, he always takes so much notice of me!—And here is also Signor Verezzi, and who do you think besides, ma'amselle?"

"I cannot guess, Annette; tell me quickly,"

"Nay, ma'am, do guess once."

"Well, then," said Emily, with assumed composure, "it is—Count Morano, I suppose."

"Holy Virgin!" cried Annette, "are you ill, ma'amselle? you are going to faint! let me get some water."

Emily sank into a chair.

"Stay, Annette," said she feebly, "do not leave me—I shall soon be better: open the casement.—The count, you say—he is come, then?"

"Who, I!—the count! No, ma'amselle, I did not say so."

"He is *not* come, then?" said Emily eagerly.

"No, ma'amselle."

"You are sure of it?"

"Lord bless me!" said Annette, "you recover very suddenly, ma'am! why, I thought you was dying just now."

"But the count—you are sure, is not come?"

"Oh, yes, quite sure of that, ma'amselle. Why I was looking out through the grate in the north turret, when the carriages drove into the courtyard, and I never expected to see such a goodly sight in this dismal old castle! but here are masters and servants too, enough to make the place ring again. Oh, I was ready to leap through the rusty old bars for joy!—Oh, who would ever have thought of seeing a Christian face in this huge dreary house! I could have kissed the very horses that brought them."

"Well, Annette, well, I am better now."

"Yes, ma'amselle, I see you are. Oh, all the servants will lead merry lives here, now; we shall have singing and dancing in the little hall, for the signor cannot hear us there—and droll stories—Ludovico's come, ma'am; yes, there is Ludovico come with them! You remember Ludovico, ma'am—a tall, handsome young man—Signor Cavigni's lackey—who always wears his cloak with such a grace, thrown round his left arm, and his hat set on so smartly, all on one side and——"

"No," said Emily, who was wearied by her loquacity.

"What, ma'amselle, don't you remember Ludovico—who rowed the cavaliere's gondola at the last regatta, and won the prize? And who used to sing such sweet verses about Orlandos, and about the Blackamoors, too; and Charly—Charly—magne,

—yes, that was the name—all under my lattice, in the west portico, on the moonlight nights at Venice? Oh! I have listened to him——”

“I fear, to thy peril, my good Annette,” said Emily: “for it seems his verses have stolen thy heart. But let me advise you; if it is so, keep the secret; never let him know it.”

“Ah—ma’amselle—how can one keep such a secret as that?”

“Well, Annette, I am now so much better that you may leave me.”

“Oh, but ma’amselle, I forgot to ask—how did you sleep in this dreary old chamber last night?—“As well as usual.”—

“Did you hear no noises?”—“None.”—“Nor see anything?”—

“Nothing.”—“Well, that is surprising!”—“Not in the least: and tell me why you ask these questions.”

“Oh, ma’amselle! I would not tell you for the world, nor all I have heard about this chamber, either; it would frighten you so.”

“If that is all, you have frightened me already, and may therefore tell me what you know without hurting your conscience.”

“O Lord! they say the room is haunted, and has been so these many years.”

“It is by a ghost, then, who can draw bolts,” said Emily, endeavouring to laugh away her apprehensions; “for I left the door open last night and found it fastened this morning.”

Annette turned pale, and said not a word.

“Do you know whether any of the servants fastened this door in the morning, before I rose?”

“No, ma’am, that I will be bound they did not; but I don’t know: shall I go and ask, ma’amselle?” said Annette, moving hastily towards the corridor.

“Stay, Annette, I have another question to ask; tell me what you have heard concerning this room, and whither that staircase leads.”

“I will go and ask it all directly, ma’am; besides, I am sure my lady wants me. I cannot stay now, indeed, ma’am.”

She hurried from the room without waiting Emily’s reply, whose heart, lightened by the certainty that Morano was not arrived, allowed her to smile at the superstitious terror which had seized on Annette; for though she sometimes felt its influence herself, she could smile at it when apparent in other persons.

Montoni having refused Emily another chamber, she determined to bear with patience the evil she could not remove, and in order to make the room as comfortable as possible, unpacked

her books, her sweet delight in happier days, and her soothing resource in the hours of moderate sorrow: but there were hours when even these failed of their effect; when the genius, the taste, the enthusiasm of the sublimest writers were felt no longer.

Her little library being arranged on a high chest, part of the furniture of the room, she took out her drawing utensils, and was tranquil enough to be pleased with the thought of sketching the sublime scenes beheld from her windows; but she suddenly checked this pleasure, remembering how often she had soothed herself by the intention of obtaining amusement of this kind, and had been prevented by some new circumstance of misfortune.

"How can I suffer myself to be deluded by hope," said she, "and, because Count Morano is not yet arrived, feel a momentary happiness? Alas! what is it to me, whether he is here to-day or to-morrow, if he comes at all?—and that he will come, it were weakness to doubt."

To withdraw her thoughts, however, from the subject of her misfortunes, she attempted to read; but her attention wandered from the page, and at length she threw aside the book, and determined to explore the adjoining chambers of the castle. Her imagination was pleased with the view of ancient grandeur, and an emotion of melancholy awe awakened all its powers, as she walked through rooms obscure and desolate, where no footsteps had passed probably for many years, and remembered the strange history of the former possessor of the edifice. This brought to her recollection the veiled picture which had attracted her curiosity on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine it. As she passed through the chambers that led to this, she found herself somewhat agitated; its connexion with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation of Annette, together with the circumstance of the veil, throwing a mystery over the object that excited a faint degree of terror. But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object from which we appear to shrink.

Emily passed on with faltering steps; and having paused a moment at the door before she attempted to open it, she then hastily entered the chamber, and went towards the picture, which appeared to be enclosed in a frame of uncommon size, that hung in a dark part of the room. She paused again, and then with a timid hand lifted the veil; but instantly let it fall—perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture; and before she could leave the chamber she dropped senseless on the floor.

When she recovered her recollection, the remembrance of what she had seen had nearly deprived her of it a second time. She had scarcely strength to remove from the room, and regain her own; and, when arrived there, wanted courage to remain alone. Horror occupied her mind, and excluded for a time all sense of past and dread of future misfortune: she seated herself near the casement because from thence she heard voices, though distant, on the terrace, and might see people pass; and these, trifling as they were, were reviving circumstances. When her spirits had recovered their tone, she considered whether she should mention what she had seen to Madame Montoni; and various and important motives urged her to do so, among which the least was the hope of the relief which an overburdened mind finds in speaking of the subjects of its interest. But she was aware of the terrible consequences which such a communication might lead to; and, dreading the indiscretion of her aunt, at length endeavoured to arm herself with resolution to observe a profound silence on the subject. Montoni and Verezzi soon after passed under the casement, speaking cheerfully, and their voices revived her. Presently the Signors Bertolini and Cavigni joined the party on the terrace; and Emily, supposing that Madame Montoni was then alone, went to seek her; for the solitude of her chamber, and its proximity to that where she had received so severe a shock, again affected her spirit.

She found her aunt in her dressing-room, preparing for dinner. Emily's pale and affrighted countenance alarmed even Madame Montoni; but she had sufficient strength of mind to be silent on the subject that still made her shudder, and which was ready to burst from her lips. In her aunt's apartment she remained till they both descended to dinner. There she met the gentlemen lately arrived, who had a kind of busy seriousness in their looks, which was somewhat unusual with them, while their thoughts seemed too much occupied by some deep interest to suffer them to bestow much attention either on Emily or Madame Montoni. They spoke little, and Montoni less. Emily, as she now looked on him, shuddered. The horror of the chamber rushed on her mind. Several times the colour faded from her cheeks; and she feared that illness would betray her emotions, and compel her to leave the room; but the strength of her resolution remedied the weakness of her frame; she obliged herself to converse, and even tried to look cheerful.

Montoni evidently laboured under some vexation, such as would probably have agitated a weaker mind or a more

susceptible heart, but which appeared, from the sternness of his countenance, only to bend up his faculties to energy and fortitude.

It was a comfortless and silent meal. The gloom of the castle seemed to have spread its contagion even over the gay countenance of Cavigni, and with this gloom was mingled a fierceness such as she had seldom seen him indicate. Count Morano was not named, and what conversation there was, turned chiefly upon the wars which at that time agitated the Italian states, the strength of the Venetian armies, and the characters of their generals.

After dinner, when the servants had withdrawn, Emily learned that the cavalier who had drawn upon himself the vengeance of Orsino had since died of his wounds, and that strict search was still making for his murderer. The intelligence seemed to disturb Montoni, who mused, and then inquired where Orsino had concealed himself. His guests, who all, except Cavigni, were ignorant that Montoni had himself assisted him to escape from Venice, replied, that he had fled in the night with such precipitation and secrecy, that his most intimate companions knew not whither. Montoni blamed himself for having asked the question, for a second thought convinced him that a man of Orsino's suspicious temper was not likely to trust any of the persons present with the knowledge of his asylum. He considered himself, however, as entitled to his utmost confidence, and did not doubt that he should soon hear of him.

Emily retired with Madame Montoni, soon after the cloth was withdrawn, and left the cavaliers to their secret councils; but not before the significant frowns of Montoni had warned his wife to depart, who passed from the hall to the ramparts, and walked for some time in silence, which Emily did not interrupt, for her mind was also occupied by interests of its own. It required all her resolution to forbear communicating to Madame Montoni the terrible subject which still thrilled her with horror: and sometimes she was on the point of doing so, merely to obtain the relief of a moment; but she knew how wholly she was in the power of Montoni, and, considering that the indiscretion of her aunt might prove fatal to them both, she compelled herself to endure a present and an inferior evil, rather than to tempt a future and a heavier one. A strange kind of presentiment frequently on this day occurred to her; it seemed as if her fate rested here, and was by some invisible means connected with this castle.

"Let me not accelerate it," said she to herself; "for whatever I may be reserved, let me, at least, avoid self-reproach."

As she looked on the massy walls of the edifice, her melancholy spirits represented it to be her prison; and she started as at a new suggestion, when she considered how far distant she was from her native country, from her little peaceful home, and from her only friend—how remote was her hope of happiness, how feeble the expectation of again seeing him! Yet the idea of Valancourt, and her confidence in his faithful love, had hitherto been her only solace, and she struggled hard to retain them. A few tears of agony started to her eyes, which she turned aside to conceal.

While she afterwards leaned on the wall of the ramparts, some peasants at a little distance were seen examining a breach before which lay a heap of stones, as if to repair it, and a rusty old cannon that appeared to have fallen from its station above. Madame Montoni stopped to speak to the men, and inquired what they were going to do. "To repair the fortifications, your ladyship," said one of them; a labour which she was somewhat surprised that Montoni should think necessary, particularly as he had never spoken of the castle as of a place at which he meant to reside for any considerable time; but she passed on towards a lofty arch that led from the south to the east rampart, and which adjoined the castle on one side, while on the other it supported a small watch-tower that entirely commanded the deep valley below. As she approached this arch, she saw beyond it, winding along the woody descent of a distant mountain, a long troop of horse and foot, whom she knew to be soldiers only by the glitter of their pikes and other arms, for the distance did not allow her to discover the colour of their liveries. As she gazed the vanguard issued from the woods into the valley; but the train still continued to pour over the remote summit of the mountain, in endless succession; while, in the front, the military uniform became distinguishable, and the commanders, riding first, and seeming by their gestures to direct the march of those that followed, at length approached very near to the castle.

Such a spectacle, in these solitary regions, both surprised and alarmed Madame Montoni, and she hastened towards some peasants who were employed in raising bastions before the south rampart, where the rock was less abrupt than elsewhere. These men could give no satisfactory answers to her inquiries, but, being roused by them, gazed in stupid astonishment upon the

long cavalcade. Madame Montoni then, thinking it necessary to communicate further the object of her alarm, sent Emily to say that she wished to speak to Montoni; an errand her niece did not approve, for she dreaded his frowns, which she knew this message would provoke; but she obeyed in silence.

As she drew near the apartment in which he sat with his guests, she heard them in earnest and loud dispute; and she paused a moment, trembling at the displeasure which her sudden interruption would occasion. In the next, their voices sank altogether; she then ventured to open the door, and while Montoni turned hastily and looked at her without speaking, she delivered her message.

"Tell Madame Montoni I am engaged," said he.

Emily then thought it proper to mention the subject of her alarm. Montoni and his companions rose instantly and went to the windows; but these not affording them a view of the troops, they at length proceeded to the ramparts, where Cavigni conjectured it to be a legion of *condottieri* on their march towards Modena.

One part of the cavalcade now extended along the valley, and another wound among the mountains towards the north, while some troops still lingered on the woody precipices, where the first had appeared, so that the great length of the procession seemed to include a whole army. While Montoni and his family watched its progress, they heard the sound of trumpets and the clash of cymbals in the vale, and then others answering from the heights. Emily listened with emotion to the shrill blast that awoke the echoes of the mountains, and Montoni explained the signals, with which he appeared to be well acquainted, and which meant nothing hostile. The uniform of the troops, and the kind of arms they bore, confirmed to him the conjecture of Cavigni; and he had the satisfaction to see them pass by, without even stopping to gaze upon his castle. He did not, however, leave the rampart till the bases of the mountains had shut them from his view, and the last murmur of the trumpet floated away on the wind. Cavigni and Verezzi were inspirited by this spectacle, which seemed to have roused all the fire of their temper; Montoni turned into the castle in thoughtful silence.

Emily's mind had not yet sufficiently recovered from its late shock to endure the loneliness of her chamber, and she remained up on the ramparts: for Madame Montoni had not invited her to her dressing-room, whither she had gone evidently

in low spirits; and Emily, from her late experience, had lost all wish to explore the gloomy and mysterious recesses of the castle. The ramparts, therefore, were almost her only retreat: and here she lingered till the grey haze of evening was spread over the scene.

The cavaliers supped by themselves, and Madame Montoni remained in her apartment, whither Emily went before she retired to her own. She found her aunt weeping, and in much agitation. The tenderness of Emily was naturally so soothing that it seldom failed to give comfort to the drooping heart; but Madame Montoni's was torn, and the softest accents of Emily's voice were lost upon it. With her usual delicacy, she did not appear to observe her aunt's distress; but it gave an involuntary gentleness to her manners, and an air of solicitude to her countenance, which Madame Montoni was vexed to perceive, who seemed to feel the pity of her niece to be an insult to her pride, and dismissed her as soon as she properly could. Emily did not venture to mention again the reluctance she felt to her gloomy chamber; but she requested that Annette might be permitted to remain with her until she retired to rest; and the request was somewhat reluctantly granted. Annette, however, was now with the servants, and Emily withdrew alone.

With light and hasty steps she passed through the long galleries, while the feeble glimmer of the lamp she carried only showed the gloom around her, and the passing air threatened to extinguish it. The lonely silence that reigned in this part of the castle, awed her; now and then, indeed, she heard a faint peal of laughter rise from a remote part of the edifice, where the servants were assembled; but it was soon lost, and a kind of breathless stillness remained. As she passed the suite of rooms which she had visited in the morning, her eyes glanced fearfully on the door, and she almost fancied she heard murmuring sounds within, but she paused not a moment to inquire.

Having reached her own apartment, where no blazing wood on the hearth dissipated the gloom, she sat down with a book to enliven her attention till Annette should come, and a fire could be kindled. She continued to read till her light was nearly expired; but Annette did not appear, and the solitude and obscurity of her chamber again affected her spirits, the more, because of its nearness to the scene of horror that she had witnessed in the morning. Gloomy and fantastic images came to her mind. She looked fearfully towards the door of the staircase, and then examining whether it was still fastened, found that it

was so. Unable to conquer the uneasiness she felt at the prospect of sleeping again in this remote and insecure apartment, which some person seemed to have entered during the preceding night, her impatience to see Annette, whom she had bidden to inquire concerning this circumstance, became extremely painful. She wished also to question her as to the object which had excited so much horror in her own mind, and which Annette on the preceding evening had appeared to be in part acquainted with, though her words were very remote from the truth, and it appeared plainly to Emily that the girl had been purposely misled by a false report; above all, she was surprised that the door of the chamber, which contained it, should be left unguarded. Such an instance of negligence almost surpassed belief. But her light was now expiring; the faint flashes it threw upon the walls called up all terrors of fancy, and she rose to find her way to the habitable part of the castle before it was quite extinguished.

As she opened the chamber door, she heard remote voices, and soon after saw a light issue upon the farther end of the corridor, which Annette and another servant approached. "I am glad you are come," said Emily: "what has detained you so long? Pray light me a fire immediately."

"My lady wanted me, ma'amselle," replied Annette in some confusion; "I will go and get the wood."

"No," said Caterina, "that is my business"; and left the room instantly: while Annette would have followed; but being called back, she began to talk very loud, and laugh, and seemed to mistrust a pause of silence.

Caterina soon returned with the wood: and then, when the cheerful blaze once more animated the room, and this servant had withdrawn, Emily asked Annette whether she had made the inquiry she bade her. "Yes, ma'amselle," said Annette, "but not a soul knows anything about the matter: and old Carlo—I watched him well, for they say he knows strange things—old Carlo looked so as I don't know how to tell; and he asked me again and again if I was sure the door was ever unfastened. 'Lord,' says I—'am I sure I am alive?' And as for me, ma'am, I am all astounded, as one may say, and would no more sleep in this chamber than I would on the great cannon at the end of the east rampart."

"And what objection have you to that cannon, more than to any of the rest?" said Emily smiling: "the best would be rather a hard bed."

"Yes, ma'amselle, any of them would be hard enough, for

that matter; but they do say that something has been seen in the dead of night standing beside the great cannon, as if to guard it."

"Well! my good Annette, the people who tell such stories are happy in having you for an auditor, for I perceive you believe them all."

"Dear ma'amselle! I will show you the very cannon; you can see it from these windows!"

"Well," said Emily, "but that does not prove that an apparition guards it."

"What! not if I show you the very cannon. Dear ma'am, you will believe nothing."

"Nothing probably upon this subject, but what I see," said Emily.

"Well, ma'am, but you shall see it, if you will only step this way to the casement."

Emily could not forbear laughing, and Annette looked surprised. Perceiving her extreme aptitude to credit the marvellous, Emily forbore to mention the subject she had intended, lest it should overcome her with idle terrors; and she began to speak on a lively topic—the regattas of Venice.

"Ay, ma'amselle, those rowing matches," said Annette, "and the fine moonlight nights, are all that are worth seeing in Venice. To be sure that moon is brighter than any I ever saw; and then to hear such sweet music, too, as Ludovico has often and often sung under the lattice by the west portico! Ma'amselle, it was Ludovico that told me about the picture which you wanted so to look at last night, and——"

"What picture?" said Emily, wishing Annette to explain herself.

"Oh, that terrible picture with the black veil over it."

"You never saw it, then?" said Emily.

"Who, I!—No, ma'amselle, I never did. But this morning," continued Annette, lowering her voice and looking round the room, "this morning, as it was broad daylight, do you know, ma'am, I took a strange fancy to see it, as I had heard such strange hints about it, and I got as far as the door, and should have opened it, if it had not been locked."

Emily, endeavouring to conceal the emotion this circumstance occasioned, inquired at what hour she went to the chamber, and found that it was soon after herself had been there. She also asked further questions, and the answers convinced her that Annette, and probably her informer, were ignorant of the terrible truth, though in Annette's account something very like the

truth now and then mingled with the falsehood. Emily now began to fear that her visits to the chamber had been observed, since the door had been closed so immediately after her departure; and dreaded lest this should draw upon her the vengeance of Montoni. Her anxiety, also, was excited to know whence, and for what purpose, the delusive report, which had been imposed upon Annette, had originated; since Montoni could only have wished for silence and secrecy: but she felt that the subject was too terrible for this lonely hour, and she compelled herself to leave it, to converse with Annette, whose chat, simple as it was, she preferred to the stillness of total solitude.

Thus they sat till near midnight, but not without many hints from Annette that she wished to go. The embers were now nearly burnt out; and Emily heard at a distance the thundering sound of the hall doors, as they were shut for the night. She therefore prepared for rest, but was still unwilling that Annette should leave her. At this instant the great bell of the portal sounded. They listened in fearful expectation, when, after a long pause of silence, it sounded again. Soon after they heard the noise of carriage wheels in the courtyard. Emily sank almost lifeless in her chair; "It is the count," said she.

"What, at this time of night, ma'am!" said Annette: "no, my dear lady. But, for that matter, it is a strange time of night for anybody to come!"

"Nay, pr'ithee, good Annette, stay not talking," said Emily in a voice of agony—"go, pr'ithee go, and see who it is."

Annette left the room, and carried with her the light, leaving Emily in darkness, which a few moments before would have terrified her in this room, but was now scarcely observed by her. She listened and waited in breathless expectation, and heard distant noises, but Annette did not return. Her patience at length exhausted, she tried to find her way to the corridor; but it was long before she could touch the door of the chamber, and when she had opened it, the total darkness without made her fear to proceed. Voices were now heard; and Emily even thought she distinguished those of Count Morano and Montoni. Soon after she heard steps approaching; and then a ray of light streamed through the darkness, and Annette appeared, whom Emily went to meet.

"Yes, ma'maselle," said she, "you was right, it is the count, sure enough."

"It is he," exclaimed Emily, lifting her eyes towards heaven, and supporting herself by Annette's arm.

"Good Lord! my dear lady, don't be in such a *fluster*, and look so pale, we shall soon hear more."

"We shall, indeed!" said Emily, moving as fast as she was able towards her apartment. "I am not well, give me air." Annette opened a casement, and brought water. The faintness soon left Emily, but she desired Annette would not go till she heard from Montoni.

"Dear ma'amselle! he surely will not disturb you at this time of night; why, he must think you are asleep."

"Stay with me till I am so, then," said Emily, who felt temporary relief from this suggestion, which appeared probable enough, though her fears had prevented its occurring to her. Annette, with secret reluctance, consented to stay, and Emily was now composed enough to ask her some questions; among others, whether she had seen the count.

"Yes, ma'am, I saw him alight, for I went from hence to the grate in the north turret, that overlooks the inner courtyard, you know. There I saw the count's carriage, and the count in it, waiting at the great door—for the porter had just gone to bed—with several men on horseback, all by the light of the torches they carried."

Emily was compelled to smile. "When the door was opened the count said something that I could not make out, and then got out, and another gentleman with him, I thought to be sure the signor was gone to bed, and I hastened away to my lady's dressing-room to see what I could hear. But in the way I met Ludovico, and he told me that the signor was up, counselling with his master and the other signors in the room at the end of the north gallery; and Ludovico held up his finger, and laid it on his lips, as much as to say—'There is more going on than you think of, Annette, but you must hold your tongue.' And so I did hold my tongue, ma'amselle, and came away to tell you directly."

Emily inquired who the cavalier was that accompanied the count, and how Montoni received them; but Annette could not inform her.

"Ludovico," she added, "had just been to call Signor Montoni's valet, that he might tell him they were arrived, when I met him."

Emily sat musing for some time; and then her anxiety was so much increased, that she desired Annette would go to the servants' hall, where it was possible she might hear something of the count's intention respecting his stay at the castle.

"Yes, ma'am," said Annette with readiness; "but how am I to find the way if I leave the lamp with you?"

Emily said she would light her: and they immediately quitted the chamber. When they had reached the top of the great staircase, Emily recollected that she might be seen by the count; and to avoid the great hall, Annette conducted her through some private passages to a back staircase which led directly to that of the servants.

As she returned towards her chamber, Emily began to fear that she might again lose herself in the intricacies of the castle, and again be shocked by some mysterious spectacle; and though she was already perplexed by the numerous turnings, she feared to open one of the many doors that offered. While she stepped thoughtfully along, she fancied that she heard a low moaning at no great distance, and having paused a moment, she heard it again and distinctly. Several doors appeared on the right hand of the passage. She advanced, and listened. When she came to the second, she heard a voice, apparently in complaint, within, to which she continued to listen, afraid to open the door, and unwilling to leave it. Convulsive sobs followed, and then the piercing accents of an agonizing spirit burst forth. Emily stood appalled, and looked through the gloom that surrounded her, in fearful expectation. The lamentations continued. Pity now began to subdue terror; it was possible she might administer comfort to the sufferer, at least, by expressing sympathy, and she laid her hand on the door. While she hesitated, she thought she knew this voice, disguised as it was by tones of grief. Having therefore set down the lamp in the passage, she gently opened the door, within which all was dark, except that from an inner apartment a partial light appeared; and she stepped softly on. Before she reached it, the appearance of Madame Montoni, leaning on her dressing-table, weeping and with a handkerchief held to her eyes, struck her, and she paused.

Some person was seated in a chair by the fire, but who it was she could not distinguish. He spoke now and then in a low voice, that did not allow Emily to hear what was uttered; but she thought that Madame Montoni at those times wept the more, who was too much occupied by her own distress to observe Emily, while the latter, though anxious to know what occasioned this, and who was the person admitted at so late an hour to her aunt's dressing-room, forbore to add to her sufferings by surprising her, or to take advantage of her situation by listening to a private discourse. She therefore stepped softly back,

and after some further difficulty found the way to her own chamber, where nearer interests at length excluded the surprise and concern she had felt respecting Madame Montoni.

Annette, however, returned without satisfactory intelligence; for the servants, among whom she had been, were either entirely ignorant, or affected to be so, concerning the count's intended stay at the castle. They could talk only of the steep and broken road they had just passed, and of the numerous dangers they had escaped, and express wonder how their lord could choose to encounter all these in the darkness of night; for they scarcely allowed that the torches had served for any other purpose but that of showing the dreariness of the mountains. Annette, finding she could gain no information, left them making noisy petitions for more wood on the fire, and more supper on the table.

"And now, ma'amselle," added she, "I am so sleepy—I am sure if you was so sleepy you would not desire me to sit up with you."

Emily, indeed, began to think it was cruel to wish it; she had also waited so long without receiving a summons from Montoni, that it appeared he did not mean to disturb her at this late hour, and she determined to dismiss Annette. But when she again looked round her gloomy chamber, and recollected certain circumstances, fear seized her spirits, and she hesitated.

"And yet it were cruel of me to ask you to stay till I am asleep, Annette," said she; "for I fear it will be very long before I forget myself in sleep."

"I dare say it will be very long, ma'amselle," said Annette.

"But before you go," rejoined Emily, "let me ask you—had Signor Montoni left Count Morano when you quitted the hall?"

"Oh no, ma'am, they were alone together."

"Have you been in my aunt's dressing-room since you left me?"

"No, ma'amselle: I called at the door as I passed, but it was fastened; so I thought my lady was gone to bed."

"Who, then, was with your lady just now?" said Emily, forgetting, in surprise, her usual prudence.

"Nobody, I believe, ma'am," replied Annette; "nobody has been with her, I believe, since I left you."

Emily took no further notice of the subject; and after some struggle with imaginary fears, her good nature prevailed over them so far, that she dismissed Annette for the night. She

then sat musing upon her own circumstances and those of Madame Montoni, till her eye rested on the miniature picture which she had found after her father's death among the papers he had enjoined her to destroy. It was open upon the table before her among some loose drawings, having with them been taken out of a little box by Emily some hours before. The sight of it called up many interesting reflections; but the melancholy sweetness of the countenance soothed the emotions which these had occasioned. It was the same style of countenance as that of her late father; and while she gazed on it with fondness on this account, she even fancied a resemblance in the features. But this tranquillity was suddenly interrupted when she recollected the words in the manuscript that had been found with this picture, and which had formerly occasioned her so much doubt and horror. At length she roused herself from the deep reverie into which this remembrance had thrown her; but when she rose to undress, the silence and solitude to which she was left at this midnight hour, for not even a distant sound was now heard, conspired with the impression the subject she had been considering had given to her mind to appal her. Annette's hints, too, concerning this chamber, simple as they were, had not failed to affect her, since they followed a circumstance of peculiar horror which she herself had witnessed, and since the scene of this was a chamber nearly adjoining her own.

The door of the staircase was perhaps a subject of more reasonable alarm; and she now began to apprehend, such was the aptitude of her fears, that this staircase had some private communication with the apartment, which she shuddered even to remember. Determined not to undress, she lay down to sleep in her clothes, with her late father's dog, the faithful Manchon, at the foot of the bed, whom she considered as a kind of guard.

Thus circumstanced, she tried to banish reflection; but her busy fancy would still hover over the subjects of her interest, and she heard the clock of the castle strike two before she closed her eyes.

From the disturbed slumber into which she then sank, she was soon awakened by a noise which seemed to arise within her chamber; but the silence that prevailed, as she fearfully listened, inclined her to believe that she had been alarmed by such sounds as sometimes occur in dreams, and she laid her head again upon the pillow.

A return of the noise again disturbed her; it seemed to come from that part of the room which communicated with the private

staircase, and she instantly remembered the odd circumstance of the door having been fastened, during the preceding night, by some unknown hand. Her late alarming suspicion concerning its communication also occurred to her. Her heart became faint with terror. Half-raising herself from the bed, and gently drawing aside the curtain, she looked towards the door of the staircase; but the lamp that burnt on the hearth spread so feeble a light through the apartment, that the remote parts of it were lost in shadow. The noise, however, which she was convinced came from the door, continued. It seemed like that made by the drawing of rusty bolts, and often ceased, and was then renewed more gently, as if the hand that occasioned it was restrained by a fear of discovery. While Emily kept her eyes fixed on the spot, she saw the door move, and then slowly open, and perceived something enter the room, but the extreme duskiness prevented her distinguishing what it was. Almost fainting with terror, she had yet sufficient command over herself to check the shriek that was escaping from her lips, and letting the curtain drop from her hand, continued to observe in silence the motions of the mysterious form she saw. It seemed to glide along the remote obscurity of the apartment, then paused, and, as it approached the hearth, she perceived, in a stronger light, what appeared to be a human figure. Certain remembrances now struck upon her heart, and almost subdued the feeble remains of her spirit; she continued, however, to watch the figure, which remained for some time motionless; but then, advancing slowly towards the bed, stood silently at the feet where the curtains, being a little open, allowed her still to see it; terror, however, had now deprived her of the power of discrimination, as well as of that of utterance.

Having continued there a moment, the form retreated towards the hearth, when it took the lamp, surveyed the chamber for a few moments, and then again advanced towards the bed. The light at that instant awakening the dog that had slept at Emily's feet, he barked loudly, and jumping to the floor, flew at the stranger, who struck the animal smartly with a sheathed sword and springing towards the bed, Emily discovered—Count Morano!

She gazed at him for a moment in speechless affright; while he, throwing himself on his knee at the bedside, besought her to fear nothing; and, having thrown down his sword, would have taken her hand, when the faculties that terror had suspended suddenly returned, and she sprung from the bed in the dress

which surely a kind of prophetic apprehension had prevented her, on this night, from throwing aside.

Morano rose, followed her to the door through which he had entered, and caught her hand as she reached the top of the staircase, but not before she had discovered by a gleam of a lamp another man half-way down the steps. She now screamed in despair, and, believing herself given up by Montoni, saw, indeed, no possibility of escape.

The count, who still held her hand, led her back into the chamber.

"Why all this terror?" said he in a tremulous voice. "Hear me, Emily, I come not to alarm you; no, by Heaven! I love you too well—too well for my own peace."

Emily looked at him for a moment in fearful doubt.

"Then leave me, sir," said she, "leave me instantly."

"Hear me, Emily," resumed Morano—"Hear me! I love, and am in despair—yes—in despair. How can I gaze upon you, and know that it is, perhaps, for the last time, without suffering all the frenzy of despair? But it shall not be so; you shall be mine, in spite of Montoni and all his villainy."

"In spite of Montoni!" cried Emily eagerly; "what is it I hear?"

"You hear that Montoni is a villain," exclaimed Morano with vehemence—"a villain who would have sold you to my love!—who——"

"And is he less who would have bought me?" said Emily, fixing on the count an eye of calm contempt. "Leave the room, sir, instantly," she continued in a voice trembling between joy and fear, "or I will alarm the family, and you may receive that from Signor Montoni's vengeance which I have vainly supplicated from his pity." But Emily knew that she was beyond the hearing of those who might protect her.

"You can never hope anything from his pity," said Morano; "he has used me infamously, and my vengeance shall pursue him. And for you, Emily, for you, he has new plans, more new plans more profitable than the last, no doubt." The gleam of hope which the count's former speech had revived was now nearly extinguished by the latter; and while Emily's countenance betrayed the emotions of her mind, he endeavoured to take advantage of the discovery.

"I lose time," said he; "I came not to exclaim against Montoni: I came to solicit, to plead—to Emily; to tell her all I suffer, to entreat her to save me from despair, and herself fly from des-

truction. Emily! the schemes of Montoni are unsearchable, but, I warn you, they are terrible; he has no principle when interest or ambition leads. Can I love you, and abandon you to his power? Fly, then, fly from this gloomy prison, with a lover who adores you! I have bribed a servant of the castle to open the gates, and before to-morrow's dawn you shall be far on the way to Venice."

Emily, overcome by the sudden shock she had received,—at the moment, too, when she had begun to hope for better days,—now thought she saw destruction surround her on every side. Unable to reply, and almost to think, she threw herself into a chair, pale and breathless. That Montoni had formerly sold her to Morano, was very probable; that he had now withdrawn his consent to the marriage, was evident from the count's present conduct; and it was nearly certain that a scheme of stronger interest only could have induced the selfish Montoni to forgo a plan which he had hitherto so strenuously pursued. These reflections made her tremble at the hints which Morano had just given, which she no longer hesitated to believe; and while she shrunk from the new scenes of misery and oppression that might await her in the castle of Udolpho, she was compelled to observe, that almost her only means of escaping them was by submitting herself to the protection of this man, with whom evils more certain and not less terrible appeared—evils upon which she could not endure to pause for an instant.

Her silence, though it was that of agony, encouraged the hopes of Morano, who watched her countenance with impatience, took again the resisting hand she had withdrawn, and, as he pressed it to his heart, again conjured her to determine immediately. "Every moment we lose will make our departure more dangerous," said he: "these few moments lost may enable Montoni to overtake us."

"I beseech you, sir, be silent," said Emily faintly: "I am indeed very wretched, and wretched I must remain. Leave me—I command you, leave me to my fate."

"Never!" cried the count vehemently: "let me perish first! But forgive my violence! the thought of losing you is madness. You cannot be ignorant of Montoni's character; you may be ignorant of his schemes—nay, you must be so, or you would not hesitate between my love and his power."

"Nor do I hesitate," said Emily.

"Let us go, then," said Morano, eagerly kissing her hand, and rising; "my carriage waits below the castle walls."

"You mistake me, sir," said Emily. "Allow me to thank you for the interest you express in my welfare, and allow me to decide by my own choice. I shall remain under the protection of Signor Montoni."

"Under his protection!" exclaimed Morano proudly—"his *protection*! Emily, why will you suffer yourself to be thus deluded? I have already told you what you have to expect from his *protection*."

"And pardon me, sir, if in this instance I doubt mere assertion, and, to be convinced, require something approaching to proof."

"I have now neither the time nor the means of adducing proof," replied the count.

"Nor have I, sir, the inclination to listen to it, if you had."

"But you trifle with my patience and my distress," continued Morano. "Is a marriage with a man who adores you so very terrible in your eyes, that you would prefer to it all the misery to which Montoni may condemn you in this remote prison? Some wretch must have stolen those affections which ought to be mine, or you could not thus obstinately persist in refusing an offer that would place you beyond the reach of oppression."—Morano walked about the room with quick steps and a disturbed air.

"This discourse, Count Morano, sufficiently proves that my affections ought not to be yours," said Emily mildly; "and this conduct, that I should not be placed beyond the reach of oppression, so long as I remained in your power. If you wish me to believe otherwise, cease to oppress me by your presence. If you refuse this, you will compel me to expose you to the resentment of Signor Montoni."

"Yes, let him come," cried Morano furiously, "and brave my resentment! Let him dare to face once more the man he has so courageously injured; danger shall teach him morality, and vengeance justice—let him come, and receive my sword in his heart."

The vehemence with which this was uttered gave Emily new cause of alarm, who arose from her chair, but her trembling frame refused to support her, and she resumed her seat,—the words died on her lips, and when she looked wistfully towards the door of the corridor, which was locked, she considered it was impossible for her to leave the apartment before Morano would be apprised of, and able to counteract, her intention.

Without observing her agitation, he continued to pace the room in the utmost perturbation of spirits. His darkened

countenance expressed all the rage of jealousy and revenge; and a person who had seen his features under the smile of ineffable tenderness, which he so lately assumed, would now scarcely have believed them to be the same.

"Count Morano," said Emily, at length recovering her voice, "calm, I entreat you, these transports and listen to reason, if you will not to pity. You have equally misplaced your love and your hatred. I never could have returned the affection with which you honour me, and certainly have never encouraged it; neither has Signor Montoni injured you, for you must have known that he had no right to dispose of my hand, had he even possessed the power to do so. Leave, then, leave the castle, while you may with safety. Spare yourself the dreadful consequences of an unjust revenge, and the remorse of having prolonged to me these moments of suffering."

"Is it for mine or for Montoni's safety that you are thus alarmed?" said Morano coldly, and turning towards her with a look of acrimony.

"For both," replied Emily in a trembling voice.

"Unjust revenge!" cried the count, resuming the abrupt tones of passion. "Who, that looks upon that face, can imagine a punishment adequate to the injury he would have done me? Yes, I will leave the castle: but it shall not be alone. I have trifled too long. Since my prayers and my sufferings cannot prevail, force shall. I have people in waiting who shall convey you to my carriage. Your voice will bring no succour; it cannot be heard from this remote part of the castle; submit therefore, in silence, to go with me."

This was an unnecessary injunction at present; for Emily was too certain that her call would avail her nothing; and terror had so entirely disordered her thoughts, that she knew not how to plead to Morano but sat mute and trembling in the chair till he advanced to lift her from it; when she suddenly raised herself, and, with a repulsive gesture, and a countenance of forced serenity, said: "Count Morano, I am now in your power; but you will observe, that this is not the conduct which can win the esteem you appear so solicitous to obtain, and that you are preparing for yourself a load of remorse, in the miseries of a friendless orphan which can never leave you. Do you believe your heart to be, indeed, so hardened, that you can look without emotion on the suffering to which you would condemn me?"

Emily was interrupted by the growling of the dog, who now came again from the bed; and Morano looked towards the door

of the staircase, where no person appearing, he called aloud, "Cesario!"

"Emily," said the count, "why will you reduce me to adopt this conduct? How much more willingly would I persuade, than compel you to become my wife! but, by Heaven! I will not leave you to be sold by Montoni. Yet a thought glances across my mind that brings madness with it. I know not how to name it. It is preposterous—it cannot be. Yet you tremble—you grow pale! It is! it is so;—you—you—love Montoni!" cried Morano, grasping Emily's wrist, and stamping his foot on the floor.

An involuntary air of surprise appeared on her countenance. "If you have indeed believed so," said she, "believe so still."

"That look, those words confirm it," exclaimed Morano furiously. "No, no, no, Montoni had a richer prize in view than gold. But he shall not live to triumph over me! This very instant——"

He was interrupted by the loud barking of the dog.

"Stay, Count Morano," said Emily, terrified by his words and by the fury expressed in his eyes, "I will save you from this error.—Of all men, Signor Montoni is not your rival; though, if I find all other means of saving myself vain, I will try whether my voice may not arouse his servants to my succour."

"Assertion," replied Morano, "at such a moment is not to be depended upon. How could I suffer myself to doubt, even for an instant, that he could see you, and not love? But my first care shall be to convey you from the castle. Cesario! ho,—Cesario!"

A man now appeared at the door of the staircase, and other steps were heard ascending. Emily uttered a loud shriek, as Morano hurried her across the chamber, and at the same moment she heard a noise at the door that opened upon the corridor. The count paused an instant, as if his mind was suspended between love and the desire of vengeance; and in that instant the door gave way, and Montoni, followed by the old steward and several other persons, burst into the room.

"Draw!" cried Montoni to the count; who did not pause for a second bidding, but, giving Emily into the hands of the people that appeared from the staircase, turned fiercely round.

"This in thine heart, villain!" said he, as he made a thrust at Montoni with his sword, who parried the blow, and aimed another; while some of the persons who had followed him into

the room endeavoured to part the combatants, and others rescued Emily from the hands of Morano's servants.

"Was it for this, Count Morano," said Montoni, in a cool sarcastic tone of voice, "that I received you under my roof, and permitted you, though my declared enemy, to remain under it for the night? Was it that you might repay my hospitality with the treachery of a fiend, and rob me of my niece?"

"Who talks of treachery?" said Morano in a tone of unrestrained vehemence; "let him that does, show an unblushing face of innocence. Montoni, you are a villain! If there is treachery in this affair, look to yourself as the author of it. *If*—do I say? *I*—whom you have wronged with unexampled baseness, whom you have injured almost beyond redress! But why do I use words? Come on, coward, and receive justice at my hands!"

"Coward!" cried Montoni, bursting from the people who held him, and rushing on the count; when they both retreated into the corridor, where the fight continued so desperately, that none of the spectators dared approach them, Montoni swearing that the first who interfered should fall by his sword.

Jealousy and revenge lent all their fury to Morano, while the superior skill and the temperance of Montoni enabled him to wound his adversary, whom his servants now attempted to seize; but he would not be restrained, and, regardless of his wound, continued to fight. He seemed to be insensible both of pain and loss of blood, and alive only to the energy of his passions. Montoni, on the contrary, persevered in the combat with a fierce yet wary valour; he received the point of Morano's sword on his arm: but, almost in the same instant, severely wounded and disarmed him. The count then fell back into the arms of his servant, while Montoni held his sword over him, and bade him ask for life. Morano, sinking under the anguish of his wound, had scarcely replied by a gesture, and by a few words feebly articulated, that he would not—when he fainted; and Montoni was then going to have plunged the sword into his breast as he lay senseless, but his arm was arrested by Cavigni. To the interruption he yielded without much difficulty; but his complexion changed almost to blackness as he looked upon his fallen adversary, and ordered that he should be carried instantly from the castle.

In the meantime Emily, who had been withheld from leaving the chamber during the affray, now came forward into the

corridor, and pleaded a cause of common humanity with the feelings of the warmest benevolence, when she entreated Montoni to allow Morano the assistance in the castle which his situation required. But Montoni, who had seldom listened to pity, now seemed rapacious of vengeance, and, with a monster's cruelty, again ordered his defeated enemy to be taken from the castle in his present state, though there were only the woods or a solitary neighbouring cottage to shelter him from the night.

The count's servants having declared that they would not move him till he revived, Montoni stood inactive, Cavigni remonstrating, and Emily, superior to Montoni's menaces, giving water to Morano, and directing the attendants to bind up his wound. At length Montoni had leisure to feel pain from his own hurt, and he withdrew to examine it.

The count, meanwhile, having slowly recovered, the first object that he saw on raising his eyes was Emily bending over him with a countenance strongly expressive of solicitude. He surveyed her with a look of anguish.

"I have deserved this," said he, "but not from Montoni. It is from you, Emily, that I have deserved punishment, yet I receive only pity!" He paused, for he had spoken with difficulty. After a moment he proceeded: "I must resign you, but not to Montoni. Forgive me the sufferings, I have already occasioned you! But for *that* villain—his infamy shall not go unpunished. Carry me from this place," said he to his servants. "I am in no condition to travel: you must, therefore, take me to the nearest cottage; for I will not pass the night under his roof, although I may expire on the way from it."

Cesario proposed to go out and inquire for a cottage that might receive his master before he attempted to remove him: but Morano was impatient to be gone; the anguish of his mind seemed to be even greater than that of his wounds; and he rejected with disdain the offer of Cavigni to entreat Montoni that he might be suffered to pass the night in the castle. Cesario was now going to call up the carriage to the great gate, but the count forbade him. "I cannot bear the motion of a carriage," said he; "call some others of my people, that they may assist in bearing me in their arms."

At length, however, Morano submitted to reason, and consented that Cesario should first prepare some cottage to receive him. Emily, now that he had recovered his senses, was about to withdraw from the corridor, when a message from Montoni commanded her to do so, and also that the count, if he was not

already gone, should quit the castle immediately. Indignation flashed from Morano's eyes, and flushed his cheeks.

"Tell Montoni," said he, "that I shall go when it suits my own convenience; that I quit the castle he dares to call his, as I would the nest of a serpent, and that this is not the last he shall hear from me. Tell him, I will not leave *another* murder on his conscience if I can help it."

"Count Morano! do you know what you say?" said Cavigni.

"Yes, signor, I know well what I say, and he will understand well what I mean. His conscience will assist his understanding on this occasion."

"Count Morano," said Verezzi, who had hitherto silently observed him, "dare again to insult my friend, and I will plunge this sword in your body."

"It would be an action worthy the friend of a villain!" said Morano, as the strong impulse of his indignation enabled him to raise himself from the arms of his servants; but the energy was momentary, and he sunk back exhausted by the effort. Montoni's people meanwhile held Verezzi, who seemed inclined even in this instant to execute his threats; and Cavigni, who was not so depraved as to abet the cowardly malignity of Verezzi, endeavoured to withdraw him from the corridor; and Emily, whom a compassionate interest had thus long detained, was now quitting it in new terror, when the supplicating voice of Morano arrested her, and by a feeble gesture he beckoned her to draw nearer. She advanced with timid steps, but the fainting languor of his countenance again awakened her pity and overcame her terror.

"I am going from hence for ever," said he: "perhaps I shall never see you again. I would carry with me your forgiveness, Emily; nay more—I would also carry your good wishes."

"You have my forgiveness then," said Emily, "and my sincere wishes for your recovery."

"And only for my recovery?" said Morano with a sigh.

"For your general welfare," added Emily.

"Perhaps I ought to be contented with this," he resumed: "I certainly have not deserved more; but I would ask you, Emily, sometimes to think of me, and forgetting my offence, to remember only the passion which occasioned it. I would ask, alas! impossibilities: I would ask you to love me! At this moment, when I am about to part with you, and that perhaps for ever, I am scarcely myself. Emily—may you never know the torture of a passion like mine! What do I say? Oh that for me you might be sensible of such a passion!"

Emily looked impatient to be gone. "I entreat you, count, to consult your own safety," said she, "and linger here no longer. I tremble for the consequences of Signor Verezzi's passion, and of Montoni's resentment should he learn that you are still here."

Morano's face was overspread with a momentary crimson, his eyes sparkled, but he seemed endeavouring to conquer his emotion, and replied in a calm voice, "Since you are interested for my safety, I will regard it, and be gone. But, before I go, let me again hear you say that you wish me well," said he, fixing on her an earnest and mournful look.

Emily repeated her assurances. He took her hand, which she scarcely attempted to withdraw, and put it to his lips. "Farewell, Count Morano!" said Emily; and she turned to go, when a second message arrived from Montoni, and she again conjured Morano, as he valued his life, to quit the castle immediately. He regarded her in silence, with a look of fixed despair. But she had no time to enforce her compassionate entreaties, and, not daring to disobey the second command of Montoni, she left the corridor to attend him.

He was in the cedar parlour that adjoined the great hall, laid upon a couch, and suffering a degree of anguish from his wound, which few persons could have disguised as he did. His countenance, which was stern, but calm, expressed the dark passion of revenge, but no symptom of pain; bodily pain, indeed, he had always despised, and had yielded only to the strong and terrible energies of the soul. He was attended by old Carlo, and by Signor Bertolini, but Madame Montoni was not with him.

Emily trembled as she approached and received his severe rebuke for not having obeyed his first summons; and perceived also, that he attributed her stay in the corridor to a motive that had not even occurred to her artless mind.

"This is an instance of female caprice," said he, "which I ought to have foreseen. Count Morano, whose suit you obstinately rejected so long as it was countenanced by me, you favour, it seems, since you find I have dismissed him."

Emily looked astonished. "I do not comprehend you, sir," said she, "you certainly do not mean to imply, that the design of the count to visit the double chamber was founded upon any approbation of mine."

"To that I reply nothing," said Montoni; "but it must certainly be a more than common interest that made you plead so

warmly in his cause, and that could detain you thus long in his presence, contrary to my express order—in the presence of a man whom you have hitherto on all occasions most scrupulously shunned.”

“I fear, sir, it was more than common interest that detained me,” said Emily calmly; “for of late I have been inclined to think that of compassion is an uncommon one. But how could I, could *you*, sir, witness Count Morano’s deplorable condition, and not wish to relieve it?”

“You add hypocrisy to caprice,” said Montoni frowning, “and an attempt at satire to both; “but before you undertake to regulate the morals of other persons, you should learn and practise the virtues which are indispensable to a woman—sincerity, uniformity of conduct, and obedience.”

Emily, who had always endeavoured to regulate her conduct by the nicest laws, and whose mind was finely sensible not only of what is just in morals but of whatever is beautiful in the female character, was shocked by these words; yet in the next moment her heart swelled with the consciousness of having deserved praise instead of censure, and she was proudly silent. Montoni, acquainted with the delicacy of her mind, knew how keenly she would feel his rebuke; but he was a stranger to the luxury of conscious worth, and therefore did not foresee the energy of that sentiment which now repelled his satire. Turning to a servant who had lately entered the room, he asked whether Morano had quitted the castle. The man answered that his servants were then removing him on a couch to a neighbouring cottage. Montoni seemed somewhat appeased on hearing this; and when Ludovico appeared a few moments after, and said that Morano was gone, he told Emily she might retire to her apartment.

She withdrew willingly from his presence; but the thought of passing the remainder of the night in a chamber which the door from the staircase made liable to the intrusion of any person, now alarmed her more than ever; and she determined to call at Madame Montoni’s room, and request that Annette might be permitted to be with her.

On reaching the great gallery, she heard voices seemingly in dispute; and her spirits now apt to take alarm, she paused, but soon distinguished some words of Cavigni and Verezzi, and went towards them in the hope of conciliating their difference. They were alone. Verezzi’s face was still flushed with rage; and as the first object of it was now removed from him, he

appeared willing to transfer his resentment to Cavigni, who seemed to be expostulating rather than disputing with him.

Verezzi was protesting that he would instantly inform Montoni of the insult which Morano had thrown out against him, and above all, that wherein he had accused him of murder.

"There is no answering," said Cavigni, "for the words of a man in passion; little serious regard ought to be paid to them. If you persist in your resolution, the consequences may be fatal to both. We have now more serious interests to pursue than those of a petty revenge."

Emily joined her entreaties to Cavigni's arguments, and they at length prevailed so far, as that Verezzi consented to retire without seeing Montoni.

On calling at her aunt's apartment, she found it fastened. In a few minutes, however, it was opened by Madame Montoni herself.

It may be remembered, that it was by a door leading into the bedroom from a back passage that Emily had secretly entered a few hours preceding. She now conjectured, by the calmness of Madame Montoni's air, that she was not apprised of the accident which had befallen her husband, and was beginning to inform her of it in the tenderest manner she could, when her aunt interrupted her by saying she was acquainted with the whole affair.

Emily knew, indeed, that she had little reason to love Montoni, but could scarcely have believed her capable of such perfect apathy as she now discovered towards him: having obtained permission, however, for Annette to sleep in her chamber, she went thither immediately.

A track of blood appeared along the corridor leading to it: and on the spot where the count and Montoni had fought the whole floor was stained. Emily shuddered, and leaned on Annette as she passed. When she reached her apartment, she instantly determined, since the door of the staircase had been left open, and that Annette was now with her, to explore whither it led—a circumstance now materially connected with her own safety. Annette accordingly, half curious and half afraid, proposed to descend the stairs; but on approaching the door they perceived that it was already fastened without; and their care was then directed to the securing it on the inside also, by placing against it as much of the heavy furniture of the room as they could lift. Emily then retired to bed, and Annette continued on a chair by the hearth, where some feeble embers remained.

CHAPTER XX

Of aery tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.

MILTON.

It is now necessary to mention some circumstances which could not be related amidst the events of Emily's hasty departure from Venice, or together with those which so rapidly succeeded to her arrival in the castle.

On the morning of her journey, Count Morano had gone at the appointed hour to the mansion of Montoni to demand his bride. When he reached it, he was somewhat surprised by the silence and solitary air of the portico where Montoni's lackeys usually loitered; but surprise was soon changed to astonishment; and astonishment to the rage of disappointment, when the door was opened by an old woman, who told his servants that her master and his family had left Venice, early in the morning, for terra firma. Scarcely believing what his servants told, he left his gondola, and rushed into the hall to inquire further. The old woman, who was the only person left in care of the mansion, persisted in her story, which the silent and deserted apartments soon convinced him was no fiction. He then accized her with a menacing air, as if he meant to wreak all his vengeance upon her, at the same time asking her twenty questions in a breath, and all these with a gesticulation so furious that she was deprived of the power of answering them; then suddenly letting her go, he stamped about the hall like a madman, cursing Montoni and his own folly.

When the good woman was at liberty, and had somewhat recovered from her fright, she told him all she knew of the affair, which was indeed very little, but enough to enable Morano to discover that Montoni was gone to his castle on the Apennine. Thither he followed, as soon as his servants could complete the necessary preparation for the journey, accompanied by a friend, and attended by a number of his people, determined to obtain Emily or a full revenge on Montoni. When his mind had recovered from the first effervescence of rage, and his thoughts became less obscured, his conscience hinted to him certain circumstances which in some measure explained the conduct of Montoni; but how the latter could have been led to suspect an intention which he had believed was known only to himself, he could not even guess. On this occasion, however, he had been partly betrayed by that sympathetic intelligence which

may be said to exist between bad minds, and which teaches one man to judge what another will do in the same circumstances. Thus it was with Montoni, who had now received indisputable proof of a truth which he had some time suspected—that Morano's circumstances, instead of being affluent, as he had been bidden to believe, were greatly involved. Montoni had been interested in his suit by motives entirely selfish, those of avarice and pride, the last of which would have been gratified by an alliance with a Venetian nobleman, the former by Emily's estate in Gascony, which he had stipulated, as the price of his favour, should be delivered up to him from the day of her marriage. In the meantime he had been led to suspect the consequence of the count's boundless extravagance; but it was not till the evening preceding the intended nuptials that he obtained certain information of his distressed circumstances. He did not hesitate then to infer that Morano designed to defraud him of Emily's estate; and in this supposition he was confirmed, and with apparent reason, by the subsequent conduct of the count, who, after having appointed to meet on that night for the purpose of signing the instrument which was to secure to him his reward, failed in his engagement. Such a circumstance, indeed, in a man of Morano's gay and thoughtless character, and at a time when his mind was engaged by the bustle of preparation for his nuptials, might have been attributed to a cause less decisive than design: but Montoni did not hesitate an instant to interpret it his own way; and after vainly waiting the count's arrival for several hours, he gave orders for his people to be in readiness to set off at a moment's notice. By hastening to Udolpho he intended to remove Emily from the reach of Morano, as well as to break off the affair without submitting himself to useless altercation: and if the count meant what he called honourably, he would doubtless follow Emily and sign the writings in question. If this was done, so little consideration had Montoni for her welfare, that he would not have scrupled to sacrifice her to a man of ruined fortune, since by that means he could enrich himself; and he forbore to mention to her the motive of his sudden journey, lest the hope it might revive should render her more intractable when submission would be required.

With these considerations he had left Venice; and with others totally different, Morano had soon after pursued his steps across the rugged Apennines. When his arrival was announced at the castle, Montoni did not believe that he would have presumed to show himself, unless he had meant to fulfil his engagement, and

he therefore readily admitted him; but the enraged countenance and expressions of Morano as he entered the apartment, instantly undeceived him; and when Montoni had explained in part the motives of his abrupt departure from Venice, the count still persisted in demanding Emily and reproaching Montoni, without even naming the former stipulation.

Montoni, at length weary of the dispute, deferred the settling of it till the morrow, and Morano retired with some hope suggested by Montoni's apparent indecision. When, however, in the silence of his own apartment, he began to consider the past conversation, the character of Montoni, and some former instances of his duplicity, the hope which he had admitted vanished, and he determined not to neglect the present possibility of obtaining Emily by other means. To his confidential valet he told his design of carrying away Emily, and sent him back to Montoni's servants to find out one among them who might enable him to execute it. The choice of this person he entrusted to the fellow's own discernment, and not imprudently; for he discovered a man whom Montoni had on some former occasion treated harshly, and who was now ready to betray him. This man conducted Cesario round the castle, through a private passage, to the staircase that led to Emily's chamber; then showed him a short way out of the building, and afterwards procured him the keys that would secure his retreat. The man was well rewarded for his trouble: how the count was rewarded for his treachery has already appeared.

Meanwhile old Carlo had overheard two of Morano's servants, who had been ordered to be in waiting with the carriage beyond the castle walls, expressing their surprise at their master's sudden and secret departure, for the valet had entrusted them with no more of Morano's designs than it was necessary for them to execute. They, however, indulged themselves in surmises, and in expressing them to each other; and from these Carlo had drawn a just conclusion. But before he ventured to disclose his apprehensions to Montoni, he endeavoured to obtain further confirmation of them, and for this purpose placed himself, with one of his fellow-servants, at the door of Emily's apartment that opened upon the corridor. He did not watch long in vain, though the growling of the dog had once nearly betrayed him. When he was convinced that Morano was in the room, and had listened long enough to his conversation to understand his scheme, he immediately alarmed Montoni, and thus rescued Emily from the designs of the count.

Montoni on the following morning appeared as usual, except that he wore his wounded arm in a sling; he went out upon the ramparts, overlooked the men employed in repairing them, gave orders for additional workmen, and then came into the castle to give audience to several persons who were just arrived, and who were shown into a private apartment, where he communicated with them for near an hour. Carlo was then summoned, and ordered to conduct the strangers to a part of the castle which in former times had been occupied by the upper servants of the family, and to provide them with every necessary refreshment. When he had done this, he was bidden to return to his master.

Meanwhile the count remained in a cottage in the skirts of the woods below, suffering under bodily and mental pain, and meditating deep revenge against Montoni. His servant, whom he had dispatched for a surgeon to the nearest town, which was, however, at a considerable distance, did not return till the following day; when, his wounds being examined and dressed, the practitioner refused to deliver any positive opinion concerning the degree of danger attending them; but giving his patient a composing draught, and ordering him to be kept quiet, he remained at the cottage to watch the event.

Emily for the remainder of the late eventful night had been suffered to sleep undisturbed; and when her mind recovered from the confusion of slumber, and she remembered that she was now released from the addresses of Count Morano, her spirits were suddenly relieved from a part of the terrible anxiety that had long oppressed them: that which remained arose chiefly from a recollection of Morano's assertions concerning the schemes of Montoni. He had said that the plans of the latter concerning Emily were unsearchable, yet that he knew them to be terrible. At the time he uttered this, she almost believed it to be designed for the purpose of prevailing with her to throw herself into his protection, and she still thought it might be chiefly so accounted for: but his assertions had left an impression on her mind, which a consideration of the character and former conduct of Montoni did not contribute to efface. She however checked her propensity to anticipate evil; and, determined to enjoy this respite from actual misfortune, tried to dismiss thought, took her instruments for drawing, and placed herself at a window to select into a landscape some features of the scenery without.

As she was thus employed, she saw walking on the rampart below the men who had so lately arrived at the castle. The sight of strangers surprised her, but still more of strangers such

as these. There was a singularity in their dress, and a certain fierceness in their air, that fixed all her attention. She withdrew from the casement while they passed, but soon returned to observe them further. Their figures seemed so well suited to the wildness of the surrounding objects, that, as they stood surveying the castle, she sketched them for banditti amid the mountain-view of her picture; when she had finished which, she was surprised to observe the spirit of her group. But she had copied from nature.

Carlo, when he had placed refreshment before these men in the apartment assigned to them, returned, as he was ordered, to Montoni, who was anxious to discover by what servant the keys of the castle had been delivered to Morano on the preceding night. But this man, though he was too faithful to his master to see him quietly injured, would not betray a fellow-servant even to justice; he therefore pretended to be ignorant who it was that had conspired with Count Morano, and related, as before, that he had only overheard some of the strangers describing the plot.

Montoni's suspicions naturally fell upon the porter, whom he ordered now to attend. Carlo hesitated, and then with slow steps went to seek him.

Barnardine, the porter, denied the accusation with a countenance so steady and undaunted, that Montoni could scarcely believe him guilty, though he knew not how to think him innocent. At length the man was dismissed from his presence, and, though the real offender, escaped detection.

Montoni then went to his wife's apartment, whither Emily followed soon after; but, finding them in high dispute, was instantly leaving the room, when her aunt called her back, and desired her to stay.—“You shall be a witness,” said she, “of my opposition. Now, sir, repeat the command I have so often refused to obey.”

Montoni turned with a stern countenance to Emily, and bade her quit the apartment, while his wife persisted in desiring that she would stay. Emily was eager to escape from this scene of contention, and anxious also to serve her aunt; but she despaired of conciliating Montoni, in whose eyes the rising tempest of his soul flashed terribly.

“Leave the room,” said he in a voice of thunder. Emily obeyed; and walking down to the rampart which the strangers had now left, continued to meditate on the unhappy marriage of her father's sister, and on her own desolate situation, occasioned by the ridiculous imprudence of her whom she had always

wished to respect and love. Madame Montoni's conduct had, indeed, rendered it impossible for Emily to do either; but her gentle heart was touched by her distress, and in the pity thus awakened she forgot the injurious treatment she had received from her.

As she sauntered on the rampart, Annette appeared at the hall door, looked cautiously round, and then advanced to meet her.

"Dear ma'amselle, I have been looking for you all over the castle," said she. "If you will step this way I will show you a picture."

"A picture!" exclaimed Emily, and shuddered.

"Yes, ma'am, a picture of the late lady of this place. Old Carlo just now told me it was her, and I thought you would be curious to see it. As to my lady, you know, ma'amselle, one cannot talk such things to her."

"And so," said Emily smilingly, "as you must talk of them to somebody——"

"Why, yes, ma'amselle; what can one do in such a place as this if one must not talk? If I was in a dungeon, if they would let me talk—it would be some comfort; nay, I would talk, if it was only to the walls. But come, ma'amselle, we lose time—let me show you the picture."

"Is it veiled?" said Emily pausing.

"Dear ma'amselle!" said Annette, fixing her eyes on Emily's face, "what makes you look so pale?—are you ill?"

"No, Annette, I am well enough, but I have no desire to see this picture. Return into the hall."

"What, ma'am, not to see the lady of this castle?" said the girl; "the lady who disappeared so strangely? Well! now, I would have run to the farthest mountain we can see, yonder, to have got a sight of such a picture; and, to speak my mind, that strange story is all that makes me care about this old castle, though it makes me thrill all over, as it were, whenever I think of it."

"Yes, Annette, you love the wonderful; but do you know that, unless you guard against this inclination, it will lead you into all the misery of superstition?"

Annette might have smiled, in her turn, at this sage observation of Emily, who could tremble with ideal terrors as much as herself, and listen almost as eagerly to the recital of a mysterious story. Annette urged her request.

"Are you sure it is a picture?" said Emily. "Have you seen it?—Is it veiled?"

"Holy Maria! ma'amselle, yes, no, yes. I am sure it is a picture—I have seen it, and it is not veiled."

The tone and look of surprise with which this was uttered, recalled Emily's prudence; who concealed her emotion under a smile, and bade Annette lead her to the picture. It was in an obscure chamber adjoining that part of the castle allotted to the servants. Several other portraits hung on the walls, covered like this with dust and cobweb.

"That is it, ma'amselle," said Annette in a low voice, and pointing. Emily advanced and surveyed the picture. It represented a lady in the flower of youth and beauty; her features were handsome and noble, full of strong expression, but had little of the captivating sweetness that Emily had looked for, and still less of the pensive mildness she loved. It was a countenance which spoke the language of passion rather than that of sentiment; a haughty impatience of misfortune—not the placid melancholy of a spirit injured, yet resigned.

"How many years have passed since this lady disappeared, Annette?" said Emily.

"Twenty years, ma'amselle, or thereabout, as they tell me; I know it is a long while ago." Emily continued to gaze upon the portrait.

"I think," resumed Annette, "the signor would do well to hang it in a better place than this old chamber. Now, in my mind, he ought to place the picture of a lady who gave him all these riches, in the handsomest room in the castle. But he may have good reasons for what he does: and some people do say that he has lost his riches as well as his gratitude. But hush, ma'am, not a word!" added Annette, laying her finger on her lips. Emily was too much absorbed in thought to hear what she said.

"'Tis a handsome lady, I am sure," continued Annette: "the signor need not be ashamed to put her in the great apartment, where the veiled picture hangs." Emily turned round. "But for that matter, she would be as little seen there as here, for the door is always locked, I find."

"Let us leave the chamber," said Emily: "and let me caution you again, Annette; be guarded in your conversation, and never tell that you know anything of that picture."

"Holy Mother!" exclaimed Annette, "it is no secret; why, all the servants have seen it already!"

Emily started. "How is this?" said she—"Have seen it! When?—how?"

"Dear ma'amselle, there is nothing surprising in that; we had all a little more *curiousness* than you had."

"I thought you told me the door was kept locked?" said Emily.

"If that is the case, ma'amselle," replied Annette, looking about her, "how could we get here?"

"Oh, you mean *this* picture," said Emily with returning calmness. "Well, Annette, here is nothing more to engage my attention; we will go."

Emily, as she passed to her own apartment, saw Montoni go down to the hall, and she turned into her aunt's dressing room, whom she found weeping and alone, grief and resentment struggling on her countenance. Pride had hitherto restrained complaint. Judging of Emily's disposition from her own, and from a consciousness of what her treatment of her deserved, she had believed that her griefs would be cause of triumph to her niece, rather than of sympathy; that she would despise, not pity her. But she knew not the tenderness and benevolence of Emily's heart, that had always taught her to forget her own injuries in the misfortunes of her enemy. The sufferings of others, whoever they might be, called forth her ready compassion, which dissipated at once every obscuring cloud to goodness that passion or prejudice might have raised in her mind.

Madame Montoni's sufferings at length rose above her pride: and when Emily had before entered the room, she would have told them all, had not her husband prevented her: now that she was no longer restrained by his presence she poured forth all her complaints to her niece.

"O Emily!" she exclaimed, "I am the most wretched of women—I am indeed cruelly treated! Who, with my prospects of happiness, could have foreseen such a wretched fate as this?—who could have thought, when I married such a man as the signor, that I should ever have to bewail my lot? But there is no judging what is for the best—there is no knowing what is for our good! The most flattering prospects often change—the best judgments may be deceived—who could have foreseen, when I married the signor, that I should ever repent my *generosity*?"

Emily thought she might have foreseen it, but this was not a thought of triumph. She placed herself in a chair near her aunt, took her hand, and with one of those looks of soft compassion which might characterize the countenance of a guardian angel, spoke to her in the tenderest accents. But these did not soothe Madame Montoni, whom impatience to talk made unwilling

to listen. She wanted to complain, not to be consoled; and it was by exclamations of complaint only that Emily learned the particular circumstances of her affliction.

"Ungrateful man!" said Madame Montoni, "he has deceived me in every respect; and now he has taken me from my country and friends, to shut me up in this old castle: and here he thinks he can compel me to do whatever he designs! But he shall find that no threats can alter—— But who would have believed, who would have supposed, that a man of his family and apparent wealth had absolutely no fortune?—no, scarcely a sequin of his own! I did all for the best; I thought he was a man of consequence, of great property, or I am sure I would never have married him,—ungrateful, artful man!" She paused to take breath.

"Dear madame, be composed," said Emily: "the signor may not be so rich as you had reason to expect; but surely he cannot be very poor, since this castle and the mansion at Venice are his. May I ask what are the circumstances that particularly affect you?"

"What are the circumstances!" exclaimed Madame Montoni with resentment: "why, is it not sufficient that he had long ago ruined his own fortune by play, and that he has since lost what I brought him—and that now he would compel me to sign away my settlement (it was well I had the chief of my property settled on myself!) that he may lose this also, or throw it away in wild schemes which nobody can understand but himself? And, and——is not all this sufficient?"

"It is indeed," said Emily; "but you must recollect, dear madame, that I knew nothing of all this."

"Well; and is it not sufficient," rejoined her aunt, "that he is also absolutely ruined, that he is sunk deeply in debt, and that neither this castle nor the mansion at Venice is his own, if all his debts, honourable and dishonourable, were paid?"

"I am shocked by what you tell me, madame," said Emily.

"And is it not enough," interrupted Madame Montoni, "that he has treated me with neglect, with cruelty, because I refused to relinquish my settlements, and instead of being frightened at his menaces, resolutely defied him, and upbraided him with his shameful conduct? But I bore all meekly,—you know, niece, I never uttered a word of complaint till now; no! That such a disposition as mine should be so imposed upon! That I, whose only faults are too much kindness, too much generosity, should be chained for life to such a vile, deceitful, cruel monster!"

Want of breath compelled Madame Montoni to stop. If any such thing could have made Emily smile in these moments, it would have been this speech of her aunt, delivered in a voice very little below a scream, and with a vehemence of gesticulation of countenance that turned the whole into burlesque. Emily saw that her misfortunes did not admit of real consolation, and contemning the commonplace terms of superficial comfort, she was silent; while Madame Montoni, jealous of her own consequence, mistook this for the silence of indifference or of contempt and reproached her with a want of duty and feeling.

"Oh! I suspected what all this boasted sensibility would prove to be," rejoined she; "I thought it would not teach you to feel either duty or affection for your relations, who have treated you like their own daughter."

"Pardon me, madame," said Emily mildly, "it is not natural to me to boast, and if it was, I am sure I would not boast of sensibility—a quality, perhaps, more to be feared than desired."

"Well, well, niece, I will not dispute with you. But, as I said, Montoni threatens me with violence, if I any longer refuse to sign away my settlements, and this was the subject of our contest when you came into the room before. Now I am determined no power on earth shall make me do this. Neither will I bear all this tamely. He shall hear his true character from me; I will tell him all he deserves, in spite of his threats and cruel treatment."

Emily seized a pause of Madame Montoni's voice to speak. "Dear madame," said she, "but will not this serve to irritate the signor unnecessarily? Will it not provoke the harsh treatment you dread?"

"I do not care," replied Madame Montoni; "it does not signify; I will not submit to such usage. You would have me give up my settlements, too, I suppose?"

"No, madame, I do not exactly mean that."

"What is it you do mean, then?"

"You spoke of reproaching the signor," said Emily with hesitation.

"Why, does he not deserve reproaches?" said her aunt.

"Certainly he does; but will it be prudent in you, madame, to make them?"

"Prudent!" replied Madame Montoni. "Is this a time to talk of prudence, when one is threatened with all sorts of violence?"

"It is to avoid that violence that prudence is necessary," said Emily.

"Of prudence!" continued Madame Montoni, without attending to her; "of prudence towards a man who does not scruple to break all the common ties of humanity in his conduct to me! And it is for me to consider prudence in my behaviour towards him? I am not so mean."

"It is for your own sake, not for the signor's, madame," said Emily modestly, "that you should consult prudence. Your reproaches, however just, cannot punish him; but they may provoke him to further violence against you."

"What! would you have me submit then to whatever he commands—would you have me kneel down at his feet, and thank him for his cruelties? Would you have me give up my settlement?"

"How much you mistake me, madame!" said Emily; "I am unequal to advise you on a point so important as the last: but you will pardon me for saying that, if you consult your own peace, you will try to conciliate Signor Montoni, rather than to irritate him by reproaches."

"Conciliate, indeed! I tell you, niece, it is utterly impossible: disdain to attempt it."

Emily was shocked to observe the perverted understanding and obstinate temper of Madame Montoni; but not less grieved for her sufferings, she looked round for some alleviating circumstance to offer her. "Your situation is perhaps not so desperate, dear madame," said Emily, "as you may imagine. The signor may represent his affairs to be worse than they are, for the purpose of pleading a stronger necessity for his possession of our settlement. Besides, so long as you keep this, you may look forward to it as a resource, at least, that will afford you a competence, should the signor's future conduct compel you to sue for separation."

Madame Montoni impatiently interrupted her. "Unfeeling, cruel girl!" said she; "and so you would persuade me that I have no reason to complain, that the signor is in very flourishing circumstances, that my future prospects promise nothing but comfort, and that my griefs are as fanciful and romantic as our own! Is it the way to console me to endeavour to persuade me out of my senses and my feeling, because you happen to have no feelings yourself? I thought I was opening my heart to a person who could sympathize in my distress, but I find that our people of sensibility can feel for nobody but themselves! You may retire to your chamber."

Emily, without replying, immediately left the room, with a

mingled emotion of pity and contempt, and hastened to her own, where she yielded to the mournful reflections which a knowledge of her aunt's situation had occasioned. The conversation of the Italian with Valancourt in France again occurred to her. His hints respecting the broken fortunes of Montoni were now completely justified: those also concerning his character appeared not less so, though the particular circumstances connected with his fame, to which the stranger had alluded, yet remained to be explained. Notwithstanding that her own observations, and the words of Count Morano, had convinced her that Montoni's situation was not what it formerly appeared to be, the intelligence she had just received from her aunt on this point struck her with all the force of astonishment, which was not weakened when she considered the present style of Montoni's living, the number of servants he maintained, and the new expenses he was incurring by repairing and fortifying his castle: Her anxiety for her aunt and for herself increased with reflection. Several assertions of Morano, which on the preceding night she had believed were prompted either by interest or by resentment, now returned to her mind with the strength of truth. She could not doubt that Montoni had formerly agreed to give her to the count for a pecuniary reward;—his character and his distressed circumstances justified the belief; these, also, seemed to confirm Morano's assertion, that he now designed to dispose of her, more advantageously for himself, to a richer suitor.

Amidst the reproaches which Morano had thrown out against Montoni, he had said—he would not quit the castle *he dared to call his*, nor willingly leave *another* murder on his conscience—hints which might have no other origin than the passion of the moment: but Emily was now inclined to account for them more seriously, and she shuddered to think that she was in the hands of a man to whom it was even possible they could apply. At length, considering that reflection could neither release her from her melancholy situation nor enable her to bear it with greater fortitude, she tried to divert her anxiety, and took down from her little library a volume of her favourite Ariosto. But his wild imagery and rich invention could not long enchant her attention; his spells did not reach her heart, and over her sleeping fancy they played without awakening it.

She now put aside the book and took her lute, for it was seldom that her sufferings refused to yield to the magic of sweet sounds; when they did so, she was oppressed by sorrow, that came from excess of tenderness and regret; and there were times when

music had increased such sorrow to a degree that was scarcely endurable; when, if it had not suddenly ceased, she might have lost her reason. Such was the time when she mourned for her father, and heard the midnight strains that floated by her window, near the convent in Languedoc, on the night that followed his death.

She continued to play till Annette brought dinner into her chamber, at which Emily was surprised, and inquired whose order she obeyed. "My lady's, ma'amselle," replied Annette: "the signor ordered her dinner to be carried to her own apartment, and so she has sent you yours. There have been sad doings between them, worse than ever, I think."

Emily, not appearing to notice what she said, sat down to the little table that was spread for her. But Annette was not to be silenced thus easily. While she waited, she told of the arrival of the men whom Emily had observed on the ramparts, and expressed much surprise at their strange appearance, as well as at the manner in which they had been attended by Montoni's order. "Do they dine with the signor, then?" said Emily.

"No, ma'amselle, they dined long ago in an apartment at the north end of the castle: but I know not when they are to go, for the signor told old Carlo to see them provided with everything necessary. They have been walking all about the castle, and asking questions of the workmen on the ramparts. I never saw such strange-looking men in my life, I am frightened whenever I see them."

Emily inquired if she had heard of Count Morano, and whether he was likely to recover: but Annette only knew that he was lodged in a cottage in the wood below, and that everybody said he must die. Emily's countenance discovered her emotion.

"Dear ma'amselle," said Annette, "to see how young ladies will disguise themselves when they are in love! I thought you hated the count, or I am sure I would not have told you; and I am sure you have cause enough to hate him."

"I hope I hate nobody," replied Emily, trying to smile; "but certainly I do not love Count Morano: I should be shocked to hear of any person dying by violent means."

"Yes, ma'amselle, but it is his own fault."

Emily looked displeased; and Annette, mistaking the cause of her displeasure, immediately began to excuse the count in her way. "To be sure, it was very ungenteel behaviour," said she, "to break into a lady's room, and then when he found his discouraging to her, to refuse to go; and then,

when the gentleman of the castle comes to desire him to walk about his business—to turn round, and draw his sword, and swear he'll run him through the body! To be sure, it was very ungenteel behaviour; but then he was disguised in love, and so did not know what he was about."

"Enough of this," said Emily, who now smiled without an effort; and Annette returned to a mention of the disagreement between Montoni and her lady. "It is nothing new," said she: "we saw and heard enough of this at Venice, though I never told you of it, ma'amselle."

"Well, Annette, it was very prudent of you not to mention it then: be as prudent now: the subject is an unpleasant one."

"Ah, dear ma'amselle!—to see now how considerate you can be about some folks, who care so little about you! I cannot bear to see you so deceived, and I must tell you. But it is all for your own good, and not to spite my lady, though, to speak truth, I have little reason to love her; but——"

"You are not speaking thus of my aunt, I hope, Annette?" said Emily gravely.

"Yes, ma'amselle, but I am, though; and if you knew as much as I do, you would not look so angry. I have often and often heard the signor and her talking over your marriage with the count, and she always advised him never to give up to your foolish whims, as she was pleased to call them, but to be resolute, and compel you to be obedient, whether you would or not. And I am sure my heart has ached a thousand times; and I have thought, when she was so unhappy herself, she might have felt a little for other people, and——"

"I thank you for your pity, Annette," said Emily, interrupting her: "but my aunt was unhappy then, and that disturbed her temper perhaps, or I think—I am sure—you may take away, Annette, I have done."

"Dear ma'amselle, you have eat nothing at all! Do try and take a little bit more. Disturbed her temper truly! why, her temper is always disturbed, I think. And at Toulouse I have heard my lady talking of you and M. Valancourt to Madame Merveille and Madame Vaison, often and often, in a very ill-natured way, as I thought, telling them what a deal of trouble she had to keep you in order, and what a fatigue and distress it was to her, and that she believed you would run away with M. Valancourt, if she was not to watch you closely; and that you connived at his coming about the house at night, and——"

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"Good God!" exclaimed Emily, blushing deeply, "it is surely impossible my aunt could thus have represented me!"

"Indeed, ma'am, I say nothing more than the truth, and not all of that. But I thought, myself, she might have found something better to discourse about, than the faults of her own niece, even if you had been in fault, ma'amselle! but I did not believe a word of what she said. But my lady does not care what she says against anybody, for that matter."

"However that may be, Annette," interrupted Emily, recovering her composure, "it does not become you to speak of the faults of my aunt to me. I know you have meant well, but say no more—I have quite dined."

Annette blushed, looked down, and then began slowly to clear the table.

"Is this, then, the reward of my ingenuousness?" said Emily, when she was alone; "the treatment I am to receive from a relation—an aunt—who ought to have been the guardian, not the slanderer of my reputation,—who, as a woman, ought to have respected the delicacy of female honour, and, as a relation, should have protected mine! But to utter falsehoods on so nice a subject—to repay the openness, and, I may say with honest pride, the propriety of my conduct, with slanders—required depravity of heart such as I could scarcely have believed existed, such as I weep to find in a relation. Oh, what a contrast does her character present to that of my beloved father! while envy and low cunning form the chief traits of hers, his was distinguished by the benevolence and philosophic wisdom! But now let me only remember, if possible, that she is unfortunate."

Emily threw her veil over her, and went down to walk upon the ramparts, the only walk, indeed, which was open to her, though she often wished that she might be permitted to ramble among the woods below, and still more, that she might sometimes explore the sublime scenes of the surrounding country. But as Montoni would not suffer her to pass the gates of the castle, she tried to be contented with the romantic views she beheld from the walls. The peasants, who had been employed on the fortifications, had left their work, and the ramparts were silent and solitary. Their lonely appearance, together with the gloom of the lowering sky, assisted the musings of her mind, and threw over it a kind of melancholy tranquillity, such as she often loved to indulge. She turned to observe a fine effect of the sun, as his rays, suddenly streaming from behind a heavy cloud, lighted up the west towers of the castle, while the rest

of the edifice was in deep shade, except that, through a lofty Gothic arch adjoining the tower, which led to another terrace, the beams darted in full splendour, and showed the three strangers she had observed in the morning. Perceiving them, she started, and a momentary fear came over her as she looked up the long rampart and saw no other persons. While she hesitated, they approached. *The gate at the end of the terrace, whither they were advancing, she knew was always locked, and she could not depart by the opposite extremity without meeting them; but before she passed them, she hastily drew a thin veil over her face, which did indeed but ill conceal her beauty.* They looked earnestly at her, and spoke to each other in bad Italian, of which she caught only a few words; but the fierceness of their countenances, now that she was near enough to discriminate them, struck her yet more than the wild singularity of their air and dress had formerly done. It was the countenance and figure of him who walked between the other two that chiefly seized her attention, which expressed a sullen haughtiness and a kind of dark watchful villainy, and gave a thrill of horror to her heart. All this was so legibly written on his features, as to be seen by a single glance; for she passed the group swiftly, and her timid eyes scarcely rested on them a moment. Having reached the terrace, she stopped, and perceived the strangers standing in the shadow of one of the turrets, gazing after her, and seemingly, by their action, in earnest conversation. She immediately left the rampart, and retired to her apartment.

In the evening, Montoni sat late, carousing with his guests in the cedar chamber. His recent triumph over Count Morano, or perhaps some other circumstance, contributed to elevate his spirits to an unusual height. He filled the goblet often, and gave a loose to merriment and talk. The gaiety of Cavigni, on the contrary, was somewhat clouded by anxiety. He kept a watchful eye upon Verezzi, whom with the utmost difficulty he had hitherto restrained from exasperating Montoni against Morano, by a mention of his late taunting words.

One of the company exultingly recurred to the event of the preceding evening. Verezzi's eyes sparkled. The mention of Morano led to that of Emily, of whom they were all profuse in their praise except Montoni, who sat silent, and then interrupted the subject.

When the servants had withdrawn, Montoni and his friends entered into close conversation, which was sometimes checked by the irascible temper of Verezzi, but in which Montoni dis-

played his conscious superiority, by that decisive look and manner which always accompanied the vigour of his thought, and to which most of his companions submitted, as to a power that they had no right to question, though of each other's self-importance they were jealously scrupulous. Amidst this conversation, one of them imprudently introduced again the name of Morano; and Verezzi, now more heated by wine, disregarded the expressive looks of Cavigni, and gave some dark hints of what had passed on the preceding night. These, however, Montoni did not appear to understand, for he continued silent in his chair, without discovering any emotion, while the choler of Verezzi increasing with the apparent insensibility of Montoni, he at length told the suggestion of Morano, that this castle did not lawfully belong to him, and that he would not willingly have another murder on his conscience.

"Am I to be insulted at my own table, and by my own friends?" said Montoni with a countenance pale in anger. "Why are the words of that madman repeated to me?" Verezzi, who had expected to hear Montoni's indignation poured forth against Morano, and answered by thanks to himself, looked with astonishment at Cavigni, who enjoyed his confusion. "Can you be weak enough to credit the assertions of a madman?" rejoined Montoni, "or, what is the same thing, a man possessed by the spirit of vengeance? But he has succeeded too well; you believe what he said."

"Signor," said Verezzi, "we believe only what we know."—"How!" interrupted Montoni sternly: "produce your proof."

"We believe only what we know," repeated Verezzi; "and we know nothing of what Morano asserts." Montoni seemed to recover himself. "I am hasty, my friends," said he, "with respect to my honour; no man shall question it with impunity—you did not mean to question it. These foolish words are not worth your remembrance, or my resentment. Verezzi, here is to your first exploit."

"Success to your first exploit," re-echoed the whole company.

"Noble signor," replied Verezzi, glad to find he had escaped Montoni's resentment, "with my good will, you shall build your ramparts of gold."

"Pass the goblet," cried Montoni.—"We will drink to Signora St. Aubert," said Cavigni.—"By your leave we will first drink to the lady of the castle," said Bertolini.—Montoni was silent. "To the lady of the castle," said his guests. He bowed his head.

"It much surprises me, signor," said Bertolini, "that you have so long neglected this castle; it is a noble edifice."

"It suits our purpose," replied Montoni, "and *is* a noble edifice. You know not, it seems, by what mischance it came to me."

"It was a lucky mischance, be it what it may, signor," replied Bertolini smiling; "I would that one so lucky had befallen me."

Montoni looked gravely at him. "If you will attend to what I say," he resumed, "you shall hear the story."

The countenances of Bertolini and Verezzi expressed something more than curiosity; Cavigni, who seemed to feel none, had probably heard the relation before.

"It is now near twenty years," said Montoni, "since this castle came into my possession. I inherit it by the female line. The lady, my predecessor, was only distantly related to me; I am the last of her family. She was beautiful and rich: I wooed her; but her heart was fixed upon another, and she rejected me. It is probable, however, that she was herself rejected of the person, whoever he might be, on whom she bestowed her favour, for a deep and settled melancholy took possession of her; and I have reason to believe she put a period to her own life. I was not at the castle at the time; but as there are some singular and mysterious circumstances attending that event, I shall repeat them."

"Repeat them!" said a voice.

Montoni was silent; the guests looked at each other, to know who spoke: but they perceived that each was making the same inquiry. Montoni at length recovered himself. "We are overheard," said he; "we will finish this subject another time. Pass the goblet."

The cavaliers looked round the wide chamber.

"Here is no person but ourselves," said Verezzi: "pray, signor, proceed."

"Did you hear anything?" said Montoni.

"We did," said Bertolini.

"It could be only fancy," said Verezzi, looking round again. "We see no person besides ourselves; and the sound I thought I heard seemed within the room. Pray, signor, go on."

Montoni paused a moment and then proceeded in a lowered voice, while the cavaliers drew nearer to attend.

"Ye are to know, signors, that the Lady Laurentini had for some months shown symptoms of a dejected mind, nay, of a disturbed imagination. Her mood was very unequal; sometimes

she was sunk in calm melancholy, and at others, as I have been told, she betrayed all the symptoms of frantic madness. It was one night in the month of October, after she had recovered from one of those fits of excess, and had sunk again into her usual melancholy, that she retired alone to her chamber, and forbade all interruption. It was the chamber at the end of the corridor, signors, where we had the affray last night. From that hour she was seen no more."

"How! seen no more!" said Bertolini; "was not her body found in the chamber?"

"Were her remains never found?" cried the rest of the company all together.

"Never!" replied Montoni.

"What reasons were there to suppose she destroyed herself, then?" said Bertolini.

"Aye, what reasons?" said Verezzi. "How happened it that her remains were never found? Although she killed herself, she could not bury herself."

Montoni looked indignantly at Verezzi, who began to apologize.

"Your pardon, signor," said he; "I did not consider that the lady was your relative when I spoke of her so lightly."

Montoni accepted the apology.

"But the signor will oblige us with the reasons which urged him to believe that the lady committed suicide."

"Those I will explain hereafter," said Montoni; "at present let me relate a most extraordinary circumstance. This conversation goes no further, signors. Listen, then, to what I am going to say."

"Listen!" said a voice.

They were all again silent, and the countenance of Montoni changed.

"This is no illusion of the fancy," said Cavigni, at length breaking the profound silence.

"No," said Bertolini; "I heard it myself, now. Yet here is no person in the room but ourselves!"

"This is very extraordinary," said Montoni, suddenly rising. "This is not to be borne; here is some deception, some trick; I will know what it means."

All the company rose from their chairs in confusion.

"It is very odd!" said Bertolini. "Here is really no stranger in the room. If it is a trick, signor, you will do well to punish the author of it severely."

"A trick! what else can it be!" said Cavigni, affecting a laugh.

The servants were now summoned, and the chamber was searched, but no person was found. The surprise and consternation of the company increased. Montoni was discomposed.

"We will leave this room," said he, "and the subject of our conversation also; it is too solemn."

His guests were equally ready to quit the apartment; but the subject had roused their curiosity, and they entreated Montoni to withdraw to another chamber and finish it: no entreaties, could, however, prevail with him. Notwithstanding his efforts to appear at ease, he was visibly and greatly disordered.

"Why, signor, you are not superstitious," cried Verezzi, jeeringly; "you, who have so often laughed at the credulity of others?"

"I am not superstitious," replied Montoni, regarding him with stern displeasure, "though I know how to despise the commonplace sentences which are frequently uttered against superstition. I will inquire further into this affair." He then left the room; and his guests, separating for the night, retired to their respective apartments.

CHAPTER XXI

He wears the rose of youth upon his cheek.

Antony and Cleopatra.

WE now return to Valancourt, who, it may be remembered, remained at Toulouse some time after the departure of Emily, restless and miserable. Each morrow that approached he designed should carry him from thence; yet to-morrow and to-morrow came, and still saw him lingering in the scene of his former happiness. He could not immediately tear himself from the spot where he had been accustomed to converse with Emily, or from the objects they had viewed together, which appeared to him memorials of her affection, as well as a kind of surety for its faithfulness; and next to the pain of bidding her adieu, was that of leaving the scenes which so powerfully awakened her image. Sometimes he had bribed a servant, who had been left in the care of Madame Montoni's château, to permit him to visit the gardens; and there he would wander for hours together, wrapped in a melancholy not unpleasing. The terrace, and the pavilion at the end of it where he had taken leave of Emily on the eve of her departure from Toulouse, were

his most favourite haunts. There, as he walked, or leaned from the window of the building, he would endeavour to recollect all she had said on that night; to catch the tones of her voice as they faintly vibrated on his memory; and to remember the exact expression of her countenance, which sometimes came suddenly to his fancy like a vision; that beautiful countenance, which awakened as by instantaneous magic all the tenderness of his heart, and seemed to tell, with irresistible eloquence—that he had lost her for ever! At these moments his hurried steps would have discovered to a spectator the despair of his heart. The character of Montoni, such as he had received from hints, and such as his fears represented it, would rise to his view, together with all the dangers it seemed to threaten to Emily and to his love. He blamed himself that he had not urged these more forcibly to her while it might have been in his power to detain her, and that he had suffered an absurd and criminal delicacy, as he termed it, to conquer so soon the reasonable arguments he had opposed to this journey. Any evil that might have attended their marriage seemed so inferior to those which now threatened their love, or even to the sufferings that absence occasioned, that he wondered how he could have ceased to urge his suit till he had convinced her of its propriety; and he would certainly now have followed her to Italy, if he could have been spared from his regiment for so long a journey. His regiment, indeed, soon reminded him that he had other duties to attend to than those of love.

A short time after his arrival at his brother's house, he was summoned to join his brother officers, and he accompanied a battalion to Paris; where a scene of novelty and gaiety opened upon him, such as till then he had only a faint idea of. But gaiety disgusted, and company fatigued, his sick mind; and he became an object of unceasing raillery to his companions, from whom, whenever he could steal an opportunity, he escaped to think of Emily. The scenes around him, however, and the company with whom he was obliged to mingle, engaged his attention, though they failed to amuse his fancy, and thus gradually weakened the habit of yielding to lamentation, till it appeared less a duty to his love to indulge it. Among his brother officers were many who added to the ordinary character of a French soldier's gaiety, some of those fascinating qualities which too frequently throw a veil over folly, and sometimes even soften the features of vice into smiles. To these men the reserved and thoughtful manners of Valancourt were a kind of

tacit censure on their own, for which they rallied him when present, and plotted against him when absent; they gloried in the thought of reducing him to their own level, and considering it to be a spirited frolic, determined to accomplish it.

Valancourt was a stranger to the gradual progress of scheme and intrigue, against which he could not be on his guard. He had not been accustomed to receive ridicule, and he could ill endure its sting; he resented it, and this only drew upon him a louder laugh. To escape from such scenes he fled into solitude, and there the image of Emily met him, and revived the pangs of love and despair. He then sought to renew those tasteful studies which had been the delight of his early years; but his mind had lost the tranquillity which is necessary for their enjoyment. To forget himself, and the grief and anxiety which the idea of her recalled, he would quit his solitude, and again mingle in the crowd—glad of a temporary relief, and rejoicing to snatch amusement for the moment.

Thus passed week after week, time gradually softening his sorrow, and habit strengthening his desire of amusement, till the scenes around him seemed to awaken into a new character, and Valancourt to have fallen among them from the clouds.

His figure and address made him a welcome visitor wherever he had been introduced, and he soon frequented the most gay and fashionable circles of Paris. Among these was the assembly of the Countess Lacleur, a woman of eminent beauty and captivating manners. She had passed the spring of youth, but her wit prolonged the triumph of its reign, and they mutually assisted the fame of each other; for those who were charmed by her loveliness, spoke with enthusiasm of her talents; and others, who admired her playful imagination, declared that her personal graces were unrivalled. But her imagination was merely playful, and her wit, if such it could be called, was brilliant, rather than just; it dazzled, and its fallacy escaped the detection of the moment; for the accents in which she pronounced it, and the smile that accompanied them, were a spell upon the judgment of the auditors. Her *petits soupers* were the most tasteful of any in Paris, and were frequented by many of the second class of *litterati*. She was fond of music, was herself a scientific performer, and had frequently concerts at her house. Valancourt, who passionately loved music, and who sometimes assisted at these concerts, admired her execution, but remembered with a sigh the eloquent simplicity of Emily's songs, and

the natural expression of her manner, which waited not to be approved by the judgment, but found their way at once to the heart.

Madame la comtesse had often deep play at her house, which she affected to restrain, but secretly encouraged; and it was well known among her friends, that the splendour of her establishment was chiefly supplied from the profits of her tables. But her *petits soupers* were the most charming imaginable! Here were all the delicacies of the four quarters of the world, all the wit and the lighter efforts of genius, all the graces of conversation—the smiles of beauty, and the charm of music; and Valancourt passed the pleasantest, as well as the most dangerous, hours in these parties.

His brother, who remained with his family in Gascony, had contented himself with giving him letters of introduction to such of his relations residing at Paris as the latter was not already known to. All these were persons of some distinction; and as neither the person, mind, nor manners of Valancourt (the younger threatened to disgrace their alliance, they received him with as much kindness as their nature, hardened by uninterrupted prosperity, would admit of: but their attentions did not extend to acts of real friendship; for they were too much occupied by their own pursuits, to feel any interest in his; and thus he was set down in the midst of Paris, in the pride of youth, with an open unsuspecting temper and ardent affections, without one friend to warn him of the dangers to which he was exposed. Emily, who, had she been present, would have saved him from these evils, by awakening his heart, and engaging him in worthy pursuits, now only increased his danger:—it was to lose the grief which the remembrance of her occasioned, that he first sought amusement; and for this end he pursued it, till habit made it an object of abstract interest.

There was also a Marchioness Champfort, a young widow, at whose assemblies he passed much of his time. She was handsome, still more artful, gay, and fond of intrigue. The society which she drew round her was less elegant and more vicious than that of the Countess Lacleur; but as she had address enough to throw a veil, though but a slight one, over the worst part of her character, she was still visited by many persons of what is called distinction. Valancourt was introduced to her parties by two of his brother officers, whose late ridicule he had now forgiven so far, that he could sometimes join in the laugh which a mention of his former manners would renew.

The gaiety of the most splendid court in Europe, the magnificence of the palaces, the entertainments, and equipages, that surrounded him—all conspired to dazzle his imagination and reanimate his spirits, and the example and maxims of his military associates to delude his mind. Emily's image, indeed, still lived there; but it was no longer the friend, the monitor, that saved him from himself, and to which he retired to weep the sweet yet melancholy tears of tenderness. When he had recourse to it, it assumed a countenance of mild reproach, that wrung his soul, and called forth tears of unmixed misery; his only escape from which was to forget the object of it, and he endeavoured therefore to think of Emily as seldom as he could.

Thus dangerously circumstanced was Valancourt, at the time when Emily was suffering at Venice from the persecuting addresses of Count Morano and the unjust authority of Montoni; at which period we leave him.

CHAPTER XXII

The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his
Does show the mood of a much-troubled breast.

King John.

LEAVING the gay scenes of Paris, we return to those of the gloomy Apennine, where Emily's thoughts were still faithful to Valancourt. Looking up to him as to her only hope, she recollected with jealous exactness every assurance and every proof she had witnessed of his affection; read again and again the letters she had received from him; weighed with intense anxiety the force of every word that spoke of his attachment; and dried her tears as she trusted in his truth.

Montoni meanwhile had made strict inquiry concerning the strange circumstance of his alarm, without obtaining information, and was at length obliged to account for it by the reasonable supposition that it was a mischievous trick played off by one of his domestics. His disagreements with Madame Montoni on the subject of her settlements were now more frequent than ever; he even confined her entirely to her own apartment, and did not scruple to threaten her with much greater severity should she persevere in her refusal.

Reason, had she consulted it, would now have perplexed her in the choice of a conduct to be adopted. It would have pointed

out the danger of irritating, by further opposition, a man such as Montoni had proved himself to be, and to whose power she had so entirely committed herself; and it would also have told her of what extreme importance to her future comfort it was, to reserve for herself those possessions, which would enable her to live independently of Montoni should she ever escape from his immediate control. But she was directed by a more decisive guide than reason—the spirit of revenge, which urged her to oppose violence to violence, and obstinacy to obstinacy.

Wholly confined to the solitude of her apartment, she was now reduced to solicit the society she had so lately rejected; for Emily was the only person, except Annette, with whom she was permitted to converse.

Generously anxious for her peace, Emily therefore tried to persuade when she could not convince, and sought by every gentle means to induce her to forbear that asperity of reply which so greatly irritated Montoni. The pride of her aunt did sometimes soften to the soothing voice of Emily, and there even were moments when she regarded her affectionate attentions with good will.

The scenes of terrible contention to which Emily was frequently compelled to be witness, exhausted her spirits more than any circumstances that had occurred since her departure from Toulouse. The gentleness and goodness of her parents, together with the scenes of her early happiness, often stole on her mind, like the visions of a higher world; while the characters and circumstances now passing beneath her eye excited both terror and surprise. She could scarcely have imagined that passions so fierce and so various, as those which Montoni exhibited, could have been concentrated in one individual; yet what more surprised her was, that on great occasions he could bend these passions, wild as they were, to the cause of his interest, and generally could disguise in his countenance their operation on his mind; but she had seen him too often, when he had thought it unnecessary to conceal his nature, to be deceived on such occasions.

Her present life appeared like the dream of a distempered imagination, or like one of those frightful fictions in which the wild genius of the poets sometimes delighted. Reflection brought only regret, and anticipation terror. How often did she wish to “steal the lark’s wing, and mount the swiftest gale,” that Languedoc and repose might once more be hers!

Of Count Morano's health she made frequent inquiry; but Annette heard only vague reports of his danger, and that his surgeon had said he would never leave the cottage alive; while Emily could not but be shocked to think that she, however innocently, might be the means of his death; and Annette, who did not fail to observe her emotion, interpreted it in her own way.

But a circumstance soon occurred, which entirely withdrew Annette's attention from this subject, and awakened the surprise and curiosity so natural to her. Coming one day to Emily's apartment, with a countenance full of importance, "What can all this mean, ma'amselle?" said she. "Would I was once safe in Languedoc again, they would never catch me going on my travels any more! I must think it a fine thing, truly, to come abroad, and see foreign parts! I little thought I was coming to be caged up in an old castle, among such dreary mountains, with the chance of being murdered, or, what is as good, having my throat cut!"

"What can all this mean, indeed, Annette?" said Emily, in astonishment.

"Ay, ma'amselle, you may look surprised; but you won't believe it, perhaps, till they have murdered you, too. You would not believe about the ghost I told you of, though I showed you the very place where it used to appear! You will believe nothing, ma'amselle."

"Not till you speak more reasonably, Annette; for Heaven's sake, explain your meaning. You spoke of murder!"

"Ay, ma'amselle, they are coming to murder us all, perhaps; but what signifies explaining?—you will not believe."

Emily again desired her to relate what she had seen or heard.

"Oh, I have seen enough, ma'am, and heard too much, as Ludovico can prove. Poor soul! they will murder him too! I little thought, when he sung those sweet verses under my lattice at Venice——" Emily looked impatient and displeased. "Well, ma'amselle, as I was saying, these preparations about the castle, and these strange-looking people that are calling here every day, and the signor's cruel usage of my lady, and his odd goings-on—all these, as I told Ludovico, can bode no good. And he bid me hold my tongue. 'So,' says I, 'the signor's strangely altered, Ludovico, in this gloomy castle, to what he was in France; there, all so gay! Nobody so gallant to my lady, then; and he could smile, too, upon a poor servant sometimes, and jeer her, too, good-naturedly enough. I remember once, when he said to

me as I was going out of my lady's dressing-room—"Annette," says he—"

"Never mind what the signor said," interrupted Emily; "but tell me, at once, the circumstance which has thus alarmed you,"

"Ay, ma'amselle," rejoined Annette, "that is just what Ludovico says; says he, 'Never mind what the signor says to you.'—So I told him what I thought about the signor. 'He is so strangely altered,' said I: 'for now he is so haughty, and so commanding, and so chary with my lady; and if he meets one he'll scarcely look at one, unless it be to frown. 'So much the better,' says Ludovico, 'so much the better.' And to tell you the truth, ma'amselle, I thought this was a very ill-natured speech of Ludovico: but I went on. 'And then,' says I, 'he is always knitting his brows; and if one speaks to him, he does not hear; and then he sits up counselling so, of a night, with other signors—there they are till long past midnight, discoursing together!' 'Ah, but,' says Ludovico, 'you don't know what they are counselling about.' 'No,' said I, 'but I can guess—it is about my young lady.' Upon that, Ludovico burst out a-laughing quite loud; so he put me in a huff, for I do not like that either I or you, ma'amselle, should be laughed at; and I turned away quick, but he stopped me. 'Don't be affronted, Annette,' said he, 'but I cannot help laughing'; and with that he laughed again. 'What!' says he, 'do you think that the signors sit up, night after night, only to counsel about thy young lady? No, no, there is something more in the wind than that. And these repairs about the castle, and these preparations about the ramparts—they are not making about young ladies.' 'Why, surely,' said I, 'the signor, my master, is not going to make war?' 'Make war!' said Ludovico, 'what, upon the mountains and the woods? for here is no living soul to make war upon, that I see.' 'What are these preparations for, then?' said I; 'why, surely nobody is coming to take away my master's castle!' 'Then there are so many ill-looking fellows coming to the castle every day,' says Ludovico, without answering my question, 'and the signor sees them all, and talks with them, and they all stay in the neighbourhood! By holy St. Marco! some of them are the most cut-throat looking dogs I ever set my eyes upon.'

"I asked Ludovico again, if he thought they were coming to take away my master's castle; and he said, 'No, he did not think they were, but he did not know for certain.' 'Then, yesterday,' said he (but you must not tell this, ma'amselle)—

'yesterday, a party of these men came, and left all their horses in the castle stables, where it seems they are to stay, for the signor ordered them all to be entertained with the best provender in the manger; but the men are most of them in the neighbouring cottages.'

"So, ma'amselle, I came to tell you all this, for I never heard anything so strange in my life. But what can these ill-looking men be come about, if it is not to murder us? and the signor knows this, or why should he be so civil to them? and why should he fortify the castle, and counsel so much with the other signors, and be so thoughtful?"

"Is this all you have to tell, Annette?" said Emily. "Have you heard nothing else that alarms you?"

"Nothing else, ma'amselle!" said Annette; "why, is not this enough?"—"Quite enough for my patience, Annette, but not quite enough to convince me we are all to be murdered, though I acknowledge here is sufficient food for curiosity." She forbore to speak her apprehensions, because she would not encourage Annette's wild terrors; but the present circumstances of the castle both surprised and alarmed her. Annette, having told her tale, left the chamber, on the wing for new wonders.

In the evening Emily had passed some melancholy hours with Madame Montoni, and was retiring to rest, when she was alarmed by a strange and loud knocking at her chamber door, and then a heavy weight fell against it, that almost burst it open. She called to know who was there, and receiving no answer, repeated the call; but a chilling silence followed. It occurred to her—for at this moment she could not reason on the probability of circumstances—that some one of the strangers lately arrived at the castle had discovered her apartment, and was come with such intent as their looks rendered too possible—to rob, perhaps to murder her. The moment she admitted this possibility, terror supplied the place of conviction, and a kind of instinctive remembrance of her remote situation from the family heightened it to a degree that almost overcame her senses. She looked at the door which led to the staircase, expecting to see it open, and listening in fearful silence for a return of the noise, till she began to think it had proceeded from this door, and a wish of escaping through the opposite one rushed upon the mind. She went to the gallery door, and then fearing to open it, lest some person might be silently lurking for her without, she stopped, but with her eyes fixed in expectation upon her opposite door of the staircase. As thus she stood, she heard

a faint breathing near her, and became convinced that some person was on the other side of the door, which was already locked. *She sought for other fastening, but there was none.*

While she yet listened, the breathing was distinctly heard, and her terror was not soothed when, looking round her wide and lonely chamber, she again considered her remote situation. As she stood hesitating whether to call for assistance, the continuance of the stillness surprised her; and her spirits would have revived had she not continued to hear the faint breathing that convinced her the person, whoever it was, had not quitted the door.

At length, worn out with anxiety, she determined to call loudly for assistance from her casement; and was advancing to it, when, whether the terror of her mind gave her ideal sounds, or that real ones did come, she thought footsteps were ascending the private staircase; and expecting to see its doors unclosed, she forgot all other cause of alarm, and retreated towards the corridor. Here she endeavoured to make her escape, but on opening the door was very nearly falling over a person who lay on the floor without. She screamed, and would have passed, but her trembling frame refused to support her; and the moment in which she leaned against the wall of the gallery allowed her leisure to observe the figure before her, and to recognize the features of Annette. Fear instantly yielded to surprise. She spoke in vain to the poor girl, who remained senseless on the floor, and then, losing all consciousness of her own weakness, hurried to her assistance.

When Annette recovered, she was helped by Emily into the chamber, but was still unable to speak, and looked round her as if her eyes followed some person in the room. Emily tried to soothe her disturbed spirits, and forbore at present to ask her any questions; but the faculty of speech was never long withheld from Annette, and she explained in broken sentences, and in her tedious way, the occasion of her disorder. She affirmed, and with a solemnity of conviction that almost staggered the incredulity of Emily, that she had seen an apparition as she was passing to her bedroom through the corridor.

"I had heard strange stories of that chamber before," said Annette; "as it was so near yours, ma'amselle, I would not tell them to you, because they would frighten you. The servants had told me often and often that it was haunted, and that was the reason why it was shut up: nay, for that matter, why the whole string of these rooms here are shut up. I quaked

whenever I went by, and I must say I did sometimes think I heard odd noises within it. But, as I said, as I was passing along the corridor, and not thinking a word about the matter, or even of the strange voice that the signors heard the other night, all of a sudden comes a great light and, looking behind me, there was a tall figure (I saw it as plainly, ma'amselle, as I see you at this moment), a tall figure gliding along (oh, I cannot describe how!) into the room that is always shut up, and nobody has the key of it but the signor, and the door shut directly."

"Then it doubtless was the signor," said Emily.

"Oh, no, ma'amselle, it could not be him; for I left him busy a-quarrelling in my lady's dressing-room!"

"You bring me strange tales, Annette," said Emily: "it was but this morning that you would have terrified me with the apprehension of murder; and now you would persuade me you have seen a ghost! These wonderful stories come too quickly."

"Nay, ma'amselle, I will say no more; only if I had not been frightened I should not have fainted dead away so. I ran as fast as I could to get to your door; but what was worst of all, I could not call out; then I thought something must be strangely the matter with me, and directly I dropt down."

"Was it the chamber where the black veil hangs?" said Emily—"Oh, no! ma'amselle, it was one nearer to this. What shall I do to get to my room? I would not go into the corridor again for the whole world!" Emily, whose spirits had been severely shocked, and who therefore did not like the thought of passing the night alone, told her she might sleep where she was. "Oh, no, ma'amselle," replied Annette, "I would not sleep in the room now for a thousand sequins."

Wearied and disappointed, Emily first ridiculed, though she shared, her fears, and then tried to soothe them; but neither attempt succeeded, and the girl persisted in believing and affirming that what she had seen was nothing human. It was not till some time after Emily had recovered her composure that she recollected the steps she had heard on the staircase—a remembrance, however, which made her insist that Annette should pass the night with her, and with much difficulty she at length prevailed, assisted by that part of the girl's fear which concerned the corridor.

Early on the following morning, as Emily crossed the hall to the ramparts, she heard a noisy bustle in the courtyard, and the clatter of horses' hoofs. Such unusual sounds excited her curiosity; and instead of going to the ramparts she went to an

upper casement, from whence she saw, in the court below, a large party of horsemen dressed in a singular but uniform habit, and completely, though variously armed. They wore a kind of short jacket composed of black and scarlet, and several of them had a cloak of plain black, which covering the person entirely hung down to the stirrups. As one of these cloaks glanced aside, she saw beneath daggers, apparently of different sizes, tucked into the horseman's belt. She further observed that these were carried in the same manner by many of the horsemen without cloaks, most of whom bore also pikes or javelins. On their heads were the small Italian caps, some of which were distinguished by black feathers. Whether these caps gave a fierce air to the countenance, or that the countenances they surmounted had naturally such an appearance, Emily thought she had never till then seen an assemblance of faces so savage and terrific. While she gazed she almost fancied herself surrounded by banditti; and a vague thought glanced athwart her fancy—that Montoni was the captain of the group before her, and that this castle was to be the place of rendezvous. *The strange and horrible supposition was but momentary, though her reason could supply none more probable, and though she discovered among the band the strangers she had formerly noticed with so much alarm, who were now distinguished by the black plume.*

While she continued gazing, Cavigni, Verezzi, and Bertolini came forth from the hall habited like the rest, except that they wore hats with a mixed plume of black and scarlet, and that their arms differed from those of the rest of the party. As they mounted their horses, Emily was struck with the exulting joy expressed on the visage of Verezzi, while Cavigni was gay, yet with a shade of thought on his countenance; and as he managed his horse with dexterity, his graceful and commanding figure, which exhibited the majesty of a hero, had never appeared to more advantage. Emily, as she observed him, thought he somewhat resembled Valancourt in the spirit and dignity of his person; but she looked in vain for the noble, benevolent countenance—the soul's intelligence, which overspread the features of the latter.

As she was hoping, she scarcely knew why, that Montoni would accompany the party, he appeared at the hall door, but unaccounted. Having carefully observed the horsemen, conversed awhile with the cavaliers, and bidden them farewell, the band wheeled round the court, and, led by Verezzi, issued

forth under the portcullis; Montoni following to the portal, and gazing after them for some time. Emily then retired from the casement, and now, certain of being unmolested, went to walk on the ramparts, from whence she soon after saw the party winding among the mountains to the west, appearing and disappearing between the woods, till distance confused their figures, consolidated their numbers, and only a dingy mass appeared moving along the heights.

Emily observed that no workmen were on the ramparts, and that the repairs of the fortifications seemed to be completed. While she sauntered thoughtfully on, she heard distant footsteps, and, raising her eyes, saw several men lurking under the castle walls, who were evidently not workmen, but looked as if they would have accorded well with the party which was gone. Wondering where Annette had hid herself so long, who might have explained some of the late circumstances, and then considering that Madame Montoni was probably risen, she went to her dressing-room, where she mentioned what had occurred; but Madame Montoni either would not or could not give any explanation of the event. The signor's reserve to his wife on this subject was probably nothing more than usual; yet to Emily it gave an air of mystery to the whole affair, that seemed to hint there was danger, if not villainy, in his schemes.

Annette presently came, and, as usual, was full of alarm; to her lady's eager inquiries of what she had heard among the servants, she replied:

"Ah, madame! nobody knows what it is all about, but old Carlo; he knows well enough, but I dare say he is as close as his master. Some say the signor is going out to frighten the enemy, as they call it: but where is the enemy? Then others say, he is going to take away somebody's castle; but I am sure he has room enough in his own, without taking other people's; and I am sure I should like it a great deal better, if there were more people to fill it."

"Ah! you will soon have your wish, I fear," replied Madame Montoni.

"No, madame; but such ill-looking fellows are not worth having. I mean such gallant, smart, merry fellows as Ludovico, who is always telling droll stories, to make one laugh. It was but yesterday, he told me such a *humoursome* tale! I can't help laughing at it now,—says he——"

"Well, we can dispense with the story," said her lady.

"Ah!" continued Annette, "he sees a great way farther than

other people! Now he sees into all the signor's meaning, without knowing a word about the matter."

"How is that?" said Madame Montoni.

"Why he says—but he made me promise not to tell, and I would not disoblige him for the world."

"What is it he made you promise not to tell?" said her lady sternly. "I insist upon knowing immediately—what is it he made you promise?"

"Oh, madame," cried Annette, "I would not tell for the universe!"

"I insist upon your telling me this instant," said Madame Montoni.

"Oh, dear madame! I would not tell for a hundred sequins! You would not have me forswear myself, madame!" exclaimed Annette.

"I will not wait another moment," said Madame Montoni. Annette was silent.

"The signor shall be informed of this directly," rejoined her mistress; "he will make you discover all."

"It is Ludovico who has discovered," said Annette: "but for mercy's sake, madame, don't tell the signor, and you shall know all directly." Madame Montoni said that she would not.

"Well, then, madame, Ludovico says that the signor, my master is—is—that is, he only thinks so, and anybody, you know, madame, is free to think—that the signor, my master, is—is——"

"Is what?" said her lady impatiently.

"That the signor, my master, is going to be—a great robber—that is—he is going to rob on his own account;—to be (but I am sure I don't understand what he means)—to be a—captain of—robbers."

"Art thou in thy senses, Annette?" said Madame Montoni; "or is this a trick to deceive me. Tell me, this instant, what Ludovico *did* say to thee;—no equivocation;—this instant——"

"Nay, madame," cried Annette, "if this is all that I am to get for having told the secret——" Her mistress thus continued to insist, and Annette to protest, till Montoni himself appeared, who bade the latter leave the room; and she withdrew, trembling for the fate of her story. Emily also was retiring, but her aunt desired she would stay; and Montoni had so often made her a witness of their contention, that he no longer had scruples on that account.

"I insist upon knowing this instant, signor, what all this

means," said his wife, "what are all these armed men, whom they tell me of, gone out about?" Montoni answered her only with a look of scorn; and Emily whispering something to her, "It does not signify," said her aunt: "I will know; and I will know, too, what the castle has been fortified for."

"Come, come," said Montoni, "other business brought me here. I must be trifled with no longer. I have immediate occasion for what I demand—those estates must be given up, without further contention; or I may find a way——"

"They never shall be given up," interrupted Madame Montoni: "they never shall enable you to carry on your wild schemes:—but what are these? I will know. Do you expect the castle to be attacked? Do you expect enemies? Am I to be shut up here, to be killed in a siege?"

"Sign the writing," said Montoni, "and you shall know more."

"What enemy can be coming?" continued his wife. "Have you entered into the service of the state? Am I to be blocked up here to die?"

"That may possibly happen," said Montoni, "unless you yield to my demand: for, come what may, you shall not quit the castle till then." Madame Montoni burst into loud lamentation, which she suddenly checked, considering that her husband's assertions might only be artifices employed to extort her consent. She hinted this suspicion, and in the next moment told him also, that his designs were not so honourable as to serve the state, and that she believed he had only commenced a captain of banditti, to join the enemies of Venice in plundering and laying waste the surrounding country.

Montoni looked at her for a moment with a steady and stern countenance; while Emily trembled; and his wife, for once, thought she had said too much. "You shall be removed this night," said he, "to the east turret; there, perhaps, you may understand the danger of offending a man who has an unlimited power over you."

Emily now fell at his feet, and with tears of terror supplicated for her aunt, who sat trembling with fear and indignation, now ready to pour forth execrations, and now to join the intercessions of Emily. Montoni, however, soon interrupted these entreaties with a terrible oath; and as he burst from Emily, leaving his cloak in her hand, she fell to the floor, with a force that occasioned her a severe blow on the forehead. But he quitted the room without attempting to raise her, whose attention was called from herself by a deep groan from Madame Montoni, who

continued otherwise unmoved in her chair, and had not fainted. Emily hastening to her assistance, saw her eyes rolling, and her features convulsed.

Having spoken to her without receiving an answer, she brought water, and supported her head while she held it to her lips; but the increasing convulsions soon compelled Emily to call for assistance. On her way through the hall, in search of Annette, she met Montoni, whom she told what had happened, and conjured to return and comfort her aunt; but he turned silently away with a look of indifference, and went out upon the ramparts. At length she found old Carlo and Annette, and they hastened to the dressing-room, where Madame Montoni had fallen on the floor, and was lying in strong convulsions. Having lifted her into the adjoining room, and laid her on the bed, the force of her disorder still made all their strength necessary to hold her; while Annette trembled and sobbed, and old Carlo looked silently and piteously on, as his feeble hands grasped those of his mistress, till turning his eyes on Emily, he exclaimed, "Good God! signora! what is the matter?"

Emily looked calmly at him, and saw his inquiring eyes fixed on her; and Annette, looking up, screamed loudly; for Emily's face was stained with blood, which continued to fall slowly from her forehead; but her attention had been so entirely occupied by the scene before her that she had felt no pain from the wound. She now held a handkerchief to her face, and, notwithstanding her faintness, continued to watch Madame Montoni, the violence of whose convulsions was abating, till at length they ceased, and left her in a kind of stupor.

"My aunt must remain quiet," said Emily. "Go, good Carlo; if we should want your assistance, I will send for you. In the meantime if you have an opportunity, speak kindly of your mistress to your master."

"Alas!" said Carlo, "I have seen too much! I have little influence with the signor. But do, dear young lady, take some care of yourself; that is an ugly wound, and you look sadly."

"Thank you, my friend, for your consideration," said Emily, smiling kindly: "the wound is trifling, it came by a fall."

Carlo shook his head, and left the room; and Emily with Annette, continued to watch by her aunt. "Did my lady tell the signor what Ludovico said, ma'amselle?" asked Annette in a whisper; but Emily quieted her fears on that subject.

"I thought what this quarrelling would come to," continued Annette; "I suppose the signor has been beating my lady."

"No, no, Annette, you are totally mistaken; nothing extraordinary has happened."

"Why, extraordinary things happen here so often, *ma'am-selle*, that there is nothing in them. Here is another legion of those ill-looking fellows come to the castle this morning."

"Hush, Annette, you will disturb my aunt; we will talk of that by and by."

They continued watching silently, till Madame Montoni uttered a low sigh, when Emily took her hand, and spoke soothingly to her; but the former gazed with unconscious eyes, and it was long before she knew her niece. Her first words then inquired for Montoni; to which Emily replied by an entreaty that she would compose her spirits, and consent to be kept quiet, adding, "that if she wished any message to be conveyed to him, she would herself deliver it." "No," said her aunt faintly, "no—I have nothing new to tell him. Does he persist in saying I shall be removed from my chamber?"

Emily replied that he had not spoken on the subject since Madame Montoni heard him; and then she tried to divert her attention to some other topic; but her aunt seemed to be inattentive to what she said, and lost in secret thoughts. Emily, having brought her some refreshment, now left her to the care of Annette, and went in search of Montoni, whom she found on a remote part of the rampart, conversing among a group of the men described by Annette. They stood round with their fierce yet subjugated looks, while he, speaking earnestly and pointing to the walls, did not perceive Emily, who remained at some distance waiting till he should be at leisure, and observing involuntarily the appearance of one man, more savage than his fellows, who stood resting on his pike and looking over the shoulders of a comrade at Montoni, to whom he listened with uncommon earnestness. This man was apparently of low condition; yet his looks appeared not to acknowledge the superiority of Montoni, as did those of his companions; and sometimes they even assumed an air of authority, which the decisive manner of the signor could not repress. Some few words of Montoni then passed in the wind; and as the men were separating, she heard him say, "This evening, then, begin the watch at sunset."

"At sunset, signor," replied one or two of them, and walked away; while Emily approached Montoni, who appeared desirous of avoiding her: but though she observed this, she had courage to proceed. She endeavoured to intercede once more for her aunt,

represented to him her sufferings, and urged the danger of exposing her to a cold apartment in her present state. "She suffers by her own folly," said Montoni, "and is not to be pitied; she knows how she may avoid these sufferings in future—if she is removed to the turret, it will be her own fault. Let her be obedient, and sign the writings you heard of, and I will think no more of it."

When Emily ventured still to plead, he sternly silenced and rebuked her for interfering in his domestic affairs, but at length dismissed her with this concession—that he would not remove Madame Montoni on the ensuing night, but allow her till the next to consider, whether she would resign her settlements, or be imprisoned in the east turret of the castle; "where she shall find," he added, "a punishment she may not expect."

Emily then hastened to inform her aunt of this short respite, and of the alternative that awaited her; to which the latter made no reply, but appeared thoughtful, while Emily, in consideration of her extreme languor, wished to soothe her mind by leading it to less interesting topics: and though these efforts were unsuccessful, and Madame Montoni became peevish, her resolution on the contended point seemed somewhat to relax, and Emily recommended as her only means of safety, that she should submit to Montoni's demand. "You know not what you advise," said her aunt. "Do you understand that these estates will descend to you at my death, if I persist in a refusal?"

"I was ignorant of that circumstance, madame," replied Emily "but the knowledge of it cannot withhold me from advising you to adopt the conduct, which not only your peace, but I fear your safety requires; and I entreat that you will not suffer a consideration comparatively so trifling to make you hesitate a moment in resigning them."

"Are you sincere, niece?"—"Is it possible you can doubt it, madame?" Her aunt appeared to be affected. "You are not unworthy of these estates, niece, I would wish to keep them for your sake—you show a virtue I did not expect."

"How have I deserved this reproof, madame?" said Emily sorrowfully.

"Reproof!" replied Madame Montoni: "I meant to praise your virtue."

"Alas! here is no exertion of virtue," rejoined Emily, "for here is no temptation to be overcome."

"Yet M. Valancourt——" said her aunt. Oh, madame!" interrupted Emily, anticipating what she would have said,

"do not let me glance on that subject; do not let my mind be stained with a wish so shockingly self-interested." She immediately changed the topic, and continued with Madame Montoni till she withdrew to her apartment for the night.

At that hour the castle was perfectly still, and every inhabitant of it, except herself, seemed to have retired to rest. As she passed along the wide and lonely galleries, dusky and silent, she felt forlorn and apprehensive of—she scarcely knew what; but when entering the corridor she recollected the incident of the preceding night, a dread seized her, lest a subject of alarm similar to that which had befallen Annette should occur to her, and which, whether real or ideal, would, she felt, have an almost equal effect upon her weakened spirits. The chamber to which Annette had alluded she did not exactly know, but understood it to be one of those she must pass in the way to her own; and sending a fearful look forward into the gloom, she stepped lightly and cautiously along, till coming to a door, from whence issued a low sound, she hesitated and paused; and during the delay of that moment her fears so much increased, that she had no power to move from the spot. Believing that she heard a human voice within, she was somewhat revived; but in the next moment the door was opened, and a person whom she conceived to be Montoni appeared, who instantly started back and closed it, though not before she had seen by the light that burned in the chamber, another person sitting in a melancholy attitude by the fire. Her terror vanished, but her astonishment only began, which was now roused by the mysterious secrecy of Montoni's manner, and by the discovery of a person whom he thus visited at midnight, in an apartment which had long been shut up, and of which such extraordinary reports were circulated.

While she thus continued hesitating, strongly prompted to watch Montoni's motions, yet fearing to irritate him by appearing to notice them, the door was again opened cautiously, and as instantly closed as before. She then stepped softly to her chamber, which was the next but one to this, but having put down her lamp, returned to an obscure corner of the corridor, to observe the proceedings of this half-seen person, and to ascertain whether it was indeed Montoni.

Having waited in silent expectation for a few minutes, with her eyes fixed on the door, it was again opened, and the same person appeared, whom she now knew to be Montoni. He looked cautiously around, without perceiving her, then, stepping forward, closed the door and left the corridor. Soon after, Emily

heard the door fastened on the inside, and she withdrew to her chamber, wondering at what she had witnessed.

It was now twelve o'clock. As she closed her casement, she heard footsteps on the terrace below, and saw imperfectly through the gloom several persons advancing, who passed under the casement. She then heard the clink of arms, and in the next moment the watchword; when recollecting the command she had overheard from Montoni, and the hour of the night, she understood that these men were for the first time relieving guard in the castle. Having listened till all was again still, she retired to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

And shall no lay of death
With pleasing murmur soothe
Her parted soul?
Shall no tear wet her grave?

SAYER.

ON the following morning Emily went early to the apartment of Madame Montoni, who had slept well, and was much recovered. Her spirits had also returned with her health, and her resolution to oppose Montoni's demands revived, though it yet struggled with her fears, which Emily, who trembled for the consequence of further opposition, endeavoured to confirm.

Her aunt, as has been already shown, had a disposition which delighted in contradictions, and which taught her, when unpleasant circumstances were offered to her understanding, not to inquire into their truth, but to seek for arguments by which she might make them appear false. Long habit had so entirely confirmed this natural propensity, that she was not conscious of possessing it. Emily's remonstrances and representations, therefore, roused her pride, instead of alarming, or convincing her judgment, and she still relied upon the discovery of some means by which she might yet avoid submitting to the demand of her husband. Considering that if she could once escape from his castle, she might defy his power, and, obtaining a decisive separation, live in comfort on the estates that yet remained for her, she mentioned this to her niece, who accorded with her in the wish, but differed from her as to the probability of its completion. She represented the impossibility of passing the gates, secured and guarded as they were, and the extreme danger of committing her design to the discretion of a servant who might

either purposely betray or accidentally disclose it. Montoni's vengeance would also disdain restraint, if her intention was detected: and though Emily wished, as fervently as she could do, to regain her freedom and return to France, she consulted only Madame Montoni's safety, and persevered in advising her to relinquish her settlement, without braving further outrage.

The struggle of contrary emotions, however, continued to rage in her aunt's bosom, and she still brooded over the chance of effecting an escape. While she thus sat, Montoni entered the room, and, without noticing his wife's indisposition, said that he came to remind her of the impolicy of trifling with him, and that he gave her only till the evening to determine, whether she would consent to his demand, or compel him, by a refusal, to remove her to the east turret. He added, that a party of cavaliers would dine with him that day, and that he expected that she would sit at the head of the table, where Emily also must be present. Madame Montoni was now on the point of uttering an absolute refusal; but suddenly considering that her liberty during this entertainment, though circumscribed, might favour her further plans, she acquiesced with seeming reluctance, and Montoni soon after left the apartment. His command struck Emily with surprise and apprehension, who shrank from the thought of being exposed to the gaze of strangers, such as her fancy represented these to be; and the words of Count Morano, now again recollected, did not soothe her fears.

When she withdrew to prepare for dinner, she dressed herself with even more simplicity than usual, that she might escape observation—a policy which did not avail her—for, as she repassed to her aunt's apartment she was met by Montoni, who censured what he called her prudish appearance, and insisted that she should wear the most splendid dress she had, even that which had been prepared for her intended nuptials with Count Morano, and which, it now appeared, her aunt had carefully brought with her from Venice. This was made, not in the Venetian, but in the Neapolitan fashion, so as to set off the shape and figure to the utmost advantage. In it, her beautiful chestnut tresses were negligently bound up in pearls, and suffered to fall back again on her neck. The simplicity of a better taste than Madame Montoni's was conspicuous in this dress, splendid as it was, and Emily's unaffected beauty never had appeared more captivately. She had now only to hope that Montoni's order was prompted, not by any extraordinary design, but by an ostentation of displaying his family, richly attired, to the

eyes of strangers: yet nothing less than his absolute command could have prevailed with her to wear a dress that had been designed for such an offensive purpose, much less to have worn it on this occasion. As she descended to dinner, the emotion of her mind threw a faint blush over her countenance, and heightened its interesting expression; for timidity had made her linger in her apartment till the utmost moment, and when she entered the hall, in which a kind of state dinner was spread, Montoni and his guests were already seated at the table. She was then going to place herself by her aunt: but Montoni waved his hand, and two of the cavaliers rose, and seated her between them.

The elder of these was a tall man, with strong Italian features, an aquiline nose, and dark penetrating eyes, that flashed with fire when his mind was agitated, and even in its state of rest retained somewhat of the wildness of the passions. His visage was long and narrow, and his complexion of a sickly yellow.

The other, who appeared to be about forty, had features of a different cast, yet Italian, and his look was slow, subtle, and penetrating; his eyes, of a dark grey, were small and hollow; his complexion was a sunburnt brown, and the contour of his face, though inclined to oval, was irregular and ill-formed.

Eight other guests sat round the table, who were all dressed in a uniform, and had all an expression, more or less, of wild fierceness, of subtle design, or of licentious passions. As Emily timidly surveyed them, she remembered the scene of the preceding morning, and again almost fancied herself surrounded by banditti; then, looking back to the tranquillity of her early life, she felt scarcely less astonishment than grief at her present situation. The scene in which they sat assisted the illusion: it was an ancient hall, gloomy from the style of its architecture, from its great extent, and because almost the only light it received was from one large Gothic window, and from a pair of folding doors, which, being open, admitted likewise a view of the west rampart, with the wild mountains of the Apennine beyond.

The middle compartment of this hall rose into a vaulted roof enriched with fretwork, and supported on three sides by pillars of marble; beyond these, long colonnades retired in gloomy grandeur, till the extent was lost in twilight. The lightest footsteps of the servants, as they advanced through these, were returned in whispering echoes, and their figures, seen at a distance imperfectly through the dusk, frequently awakened Emily's imagination. She looked alternately at Montoni, at his guests, and on the surrounding scene; and then, remembering her dear

native province, her pleasant home, and the simplicity and goodness of the friends whom she had lost, grief and surprise again occupied her mind.

When her thoughts could return from these considerations, she fancied she observed an air of authority towards his guests, such as she had never before seen him assume, though he had always been distinguished by a haughty carriage; there was something also in the manners of the strangers, that seemed perfectly, though not servilely, to acknowledge his superiority.

During dinner, the conversation was chiefly on war and politics. They talked with energy on the state of Venice, its dangers, the character of the reigning Doge, and of the chief senators; and then spoke of the state of Rome. When the repast was over, they rose, and each filling his goblet with wine from the gilded ewer that stood beside him, drank, "Success to our exploits!" Montoni was lifting his goblet to his lips to drink this toast, when suddenly the wine hissed, rose to the brim, and, as he held the glass from him, it burst into a thousand pieces.

To him who constantly used that sort of Venice glass, which had the quality of breaking upon receiving poisoned liquor, a suspicion that some of his guests had endeavoured to betray him instantly occurred, and he ordered all the gates to be closed, drew his sword, and, looking round on them, who stood in silent amazement, exclaimed, "Here is a traitor among us; let those that are innocent assist in discovering the guilty."

Indignation flashed from the eyes of the cavaliers, who all drew their swords; and Madame Montoni, terrified at what might ensue, was hastening from the hall, when her husband commanded her to stay; but his further words could not now be distinguished, for the voice of every person rose together. His order that all the servants should appear was at length obeyed, and they declared their ignorance of any deceit—a protestation which could not be believed; for it was evident that, as Montoni's liquor, and his only, had been poisoned, a deliberate design had been formed against his life, which could not have been carried so far towards its accomplishment, without the connivance of the servant who had the care of the wine ewers.

This man, with another, whose face betrayed either the consciousness of guilt or the fear of punishment, Montoni ordered to be chained instantly, and confined in the strong-room which had formerly been used as a prison. Thither likewise he would have sent all his guests, had he not foreseen the consequence of so bold and unjustifiable a proceeding. As to those, therefore, he

contented himself with swearing that no man should pass the gates till this extraordinary affair had been investigated; and then sternly bade his wife retire to her apartment, whither he suffered Emily to attend her.

In about half an hour he followed to the dressing-room; and Emily observed with horror his dark countenance and quivering lip, and heard him denounce vengeance on her aunt.

"It will avail you nothing," said he to his wife, "to deny the fact; I have proof of your guilt. Your only chance of mercy rests on a full confession;—there is nothing to hope from sullenness, or falsehood; your accomplice has confessed all."

Emily's fainting spirits were roused by astonishment, as she heard her aunt accused of a crime so atrocious, and she could not for a moment admit the possibility of her guilt. Meanwhile Madame Montoni's agitation did not permit her to reply; alternately her complexion varied from livid paleness to a crimson flush; and she trembled,—but whether with fear, or with indignation, it were difficult to decide.

"Spare your words," said Montoni, seeing her about to speak, "your countenance makes full confession of your crime.—You shall be instantly removed to the east turret."

"This accusation," said Madame Montoni, speaking with difficulty, "is used only as an excuse for your cruelty; I disdain to reply to it. You do not believe me guilty."

"Signor!" said Emily solemnly, "this dreadful charge, I would answer with my life, is false. Nay, signor," she added, observing the severity of his countenance, "this is no moment for restraint on my part; I do not scruple to tell you that you are deceived, most wickedly deceived, by the suggestion of some person who aims at the ruin of my aunt;—it is impossible that you could yourself have imagined a crime so hideous."

Montoni, his lips trembling more than before, replied only, "If you value your own safety," addressing Emily, "you will be silent. I shall know how to interpret your remonstrances should you persevere in them."

Emily raised her eyes calmly to heaven. "Here is, indeed, then, nothing to hope!" said she.

"Peace!" cried Montoni, "or you shall find there is something to fear."

He turned to his wife, who had now recovered her spirits, and who vehemently and wildly remonstrated upon this mysterious suspicion; but Montoni's rage heightened with her indignation; and Emily, dreading the event of it, threw herself

between them, and clasped his knees in silence, looking up in his face with an expression that might have softened the heart of a fiend. Whether his was hardened by a conviction of Madame Montoni's guilt, or that a bare suspicion of it made him eager to exercise vengeance, he was totally and alike insensible to the distress of his wife, and to the pleading looks of Emily, whom he made no attempt to raise, but was vehemently menacing both, when he was called out of the room by some person at the door. As he shut the door, Emily heard him turn the lock and take out the key; so that Madame Montoni and herself were now prisoners; and she saw that his designs became more and more terrible. Her endeavours to explain his motives for this circumstance were almost as ineffectual as those to soothe the distress of her aunt, whose innocence she could not doubt; but she at length accounted for Montoni's readiness to suspect his wife, by his own consciousness of cruelty towards her, and for the sudden violence of his present conduct against both, before even his suspicions could be completely formed, by his general eagerness to effect suddenly whatever he was led to desire, and also his carelessness of justice, or humanity, in accomplishing it.

Madame Montoni, after some time, again looked round in search of a possibility of escape from the castle, and conversed with Emily on the subject, who was now willing to encounter any hazard, though she forbore to encourage a hope in her aunt, which she herself did not admit. How strongly the edifice was secured, and how vigilantly guarded, she knew too well; and trembled to commit their safety to the caprice of the servant, whose assistance they must solicit. Old Carlo was compassionate, but he seemed to be too much in his master's interest to be trusted by them; Annette could of herself do little, and Emily knew Ludovico only from her report. At present, however, these considerations were useless, Madame Montoni and her niece being shut up from all intercourse, even with the persons whom there might be these reasons to reject.

In the hall, confusion and tumult still reigned. Emily, as she listened anxiously to the murmur that sounded along the gallery, sometimes fancied she heard the clashing of swords; and when she considered the nature of the provocation given by Montoni and his impetuosity, it appeared probable that nothing less than arms would terminate the contention. Madame Montoni having exhausted all her expressions of indignation, and Emily hers of comfort, they remained silent, in that kind

of breathless stillness, which, in nature, often succeeds to the uproar of conflicting elements; a stillness like the morning that dawns upon the ruins of an earthquake.

An uncertain kind of terror pervaded Emily's mind; the circumstances of the past hour still came dimly and confusedly to her memory; and her thoughts were various and rapid, though without tumult.

From this state of waking visions she was recalled by a knocking at the chamber-door, and, inquiring who was there, heard the whispering voice of Annette.

"Dear madame, let me come in; I have a great deal to say," said the poor girl.

"The door is locked," answered her lady.

"Yes, ma'am, but do pray open it."

"The signor has the key," said Madame Montoni.

"O blessed Virgin! what will become of us?" exclaimed Annette.

"Assist us to escape," said her mistress. "Where is Ludovico?"

"Below in the hall, ma'am, amongst them all, fighting with the best of them!"

"Fighting! Who are fighting?" cried Madame Montoni.

"Why, the signor, ma'am, and all the signors, and a great many more."

"Is any person much hurt?" said Emily in a tremulous voice.—"Hurt! Yes, ma'amselle,—there they lie bleeding, and the swords are clashing, and—— O holy saints! Do let me in, ma'am, they are coming this way—I shall be murdered!"

"Fly!" cried Emily, "fly! we cannot open the door."

Annette repeated that they were coming, and in the same moment fled.

"Be calm, madame," said Emily, turning to her aunt; "I entreat you to be calm; I am not frightened, not frightened in the least; do not you be alarmed."

"You can scarcely support yourself," replied her aunt; "Merciful God! what is it they mean to do with us?"

"They come, perhaps to liberate us," said Emily; "Signor Montoni perhaps is—is conquered."

The belief of his death gave her spirits a sudden shock, and she grew faint as she saw him, in imagination, expiring at her feet.

"They are coming!" cried Madame Montoni—"I hear their steps—they are at the door."

Emily turned her languid eyes to the door, but terror deprived

her of utterance. The key sounded in the lock; the door opened, and Montoni appeared, followed by three ruffian-like men. "Execute your orders," said he, turning to them, and pointing to his wife, who shrieked, but was immediately carried from the room; while Emily sank senseless on a couch, by which she had endeavoured to support herself. When she recovered, she was alone, and recollected only that Madame Montoni had been there, together with some unconnected particulars of the preceding transaction, which were, however, sufficient to renew all her terror. She looked wildly round the apartment, as if in search of some means of intelligence concerning her aunt, while neither her own danger, nor any idea of escaping from the room, immediately occurred.

When her recollection was more complete, she raised herself and went, but with only a faint hope, to examine whether the door was unfastened. It was so, and she then stepped timidly out into the gallery, but paused there, uncertain which way she should proceed. Her first wish was to gather some information as to her aunt, and she at length turned her steps to go to the lesser hall, where Annette and the other servants usually waited.

Everywhere, as she passed, she heard, from a distance, the uproar of contention, and the figures and faces which she met, hurrying along the passages, struck her mind with dismay. Emily might now have appeared like an angel of light encompassed by fiends. At length she reached the lesser hall, which was silent and deserted, but, panting for breath, she sat down to recover herself. The total stillness of this place was as awful as the tumult from which she had escaped; but she had now time to recall her scattered thoughts, to remember her personal danger; and to consider of some means of safety. She perceived that it was useless to seek Madame Montoni, through the wide extent and intricacies of the castle, now too, when every avenue seemed to be beset with ruffians; in this hall she could not resolve to stay, for she knew not how soon it might become their place of rendezvous; and though she wished to go to her chamber, she dreaded again to encounter them on the way.

Thus she sat, trembling and hesitating, when a distant murmur broke on the silence, and grew louder and louder, till she distinguished voices and steps approaching. She then rose to go; but the sounds came along the only passage by which she could depart, and she was compelled to await in the hall the arrival of the persons whose steps she heard. As these advanced, she distinguished groans, and then saw a man borne slowly along

by four others. Her spirits faltered at the sight, and she leaned against the wall for support. The bearers meanwhile entered the hall, and being too busily occupied to detain or even notice Emily, she attempted to leave it; but her strength failed, and she again sat down on the bench. A damp chillness came over her; her sight became confused; she knew not what had passed, or where she was, yet the groans of the wounded person still vibrated on her heart. In a few moments the tide of life seemed again to flow; she began to breathe more freely, and her senses revived. She had not fainted, nor had ever totally lost her consciousness, but had contrived to support herself on the bench; still without courage to turn her eyes upon the unfortunate object which remained near her, and about whom the men were yet too much engaged to attend her.

When her strength returned, she rose, and was suffered to leave the hall, though her anxiety, having produced some vain inquiries concerning Madame Montoni, had thus made a discovery of herself. Towards her chamber she now hastened as fast as her steps would bear her; for she still perceived, upon her passage, the sounds of confusion at a distance, and she endeavoured, by taking her way through some obscure rooms, to avoid encountering the persons, whose looks had terrified her before, as well as those parts of the castle where the tumult might still rage.

At length she reached her chamber, and, having secured the door of the corridor, felt herself for a moment in safety. A profound stillness reigned in this remote apartment, which not even the faint murmur of the most distant sounds now reached. She sat down near one of the casements; and as she gazed on the mountain-view beyond, the deep repose of its beauty struck her with all the force of contrast, and she could scarcely believe herself so near a scene of savage discord. The contending elements seemed to have retired from their natural spheres, and to have collected themselves into the mind of men, for there alone the tempest now reigned.

Emily tried to tranquillize her spirits; but anxiety made her constantly listen for some sound, and often look out upon the ramparts, where all, however, was lonely and still. As a sense of her own immediate danger had decreased, her apprehension concerning Madame Montoni heightened, who, she remembered, had been fiercely threatened with confinement in the east turret, and it was possible that her husband had satisfied his vengeance with this punishment. She therefore determined, when night

should return, and the inhabitants of the castle should be asleep, to explore the way to the turret, which, as the direction it stood in was mentioned, appeared not very difficult to be done. She knew indeed, that, although her aunt might be there, she could afford her no assistance, but it might give her some comfort even to know that she was discovered, and to hear the sound of her niece's voice: for herself, any certainty concerning Madame Montoni's fate appeared more tolerable than this exhausting suspense.

Meanwhile Annette did not appear, and Emily was surprised, and somewhat alarmed for her, whom in the confusion of the late scene, various accidents might have befallen, and it was improbable that she would have failed to come to her apartment, unless something unfortunate had happened.

Thus the hours passed in solitude, in silence, and in anxious conjecturing. Being not once disturbed by a message or a sound, it appeared that Montoni had wholly forgotten her, and it gave her some comfort to find that she could be so unnoticed. She endeavoured to withdraw her thoughts from the anxiety that preyed upon them, but they refused control; she could neither read nor draw, and the tones of her lute were so utterly discordant with the present state of her feelings, that she could not endure them for a moment.

The sun at length set behind the western mountains; his fiery beams faded from the clouds, and then a dun melancholy purple drew over them, and gradually involved the features of the country below. Soon after, the sentinels passed on the rampart to commence the watch.

Twilight had now spread its gloom over every object; the dismal obscurity of her chamber recalled fearful thoughts: but she remembered that, to procure a light, she must pass through a great extent of the castle, and above all, through the halls where she had already experienced so much horror. Darkness indeed in the present state of her spirits made silence and solitude terrible to her; it would also prevent the possibility of her finding her way to the turret, and condemn her to remain in suspense concerning the fate of her aunt; yet she dared not to venture forth for a lamp.

Continuing at the casement, that she might catch the last lingering gleam of evening, a thousand vague images of fear floated on her fancy. "What if some of these ruffians," said she, "should find out the private staircase, and in the darkness of night steal into my chamber!" Then recollecting the mysterious

inhabitant of the neighbouring apartment, her terror changed its object. "He is not a prisoner," said she, "though he remains in one chamber, for Montoni did not fasten the door when he left it; the unknown person himself did this; it is certain, therefore, he can come out when he pleases."

She paused; for notwithstanding the terrors of darkness, she considered it to be very improbable, whoever he was, that he could have any interest in intruding upon her retirement; and again the subject of her emotion changed, when remembering her nearness to the chamber where the veil had formerly disclosed a dreadful spectacle, she doubted whether some passage might not communicate between it and the insecure door of the staircase.

It was now entirely dark, and she left the casement. As she sat with her eyes fixed on the hearth, she thought she perceived a spark of light; it twinkled and disappeared, and then again was visible. At length, with much care, she fanned the embers of a wood fire, that had been lighted in the morning, into flame, and, having communicated it to a lamp which always stood in her room, felt a satisfaction not to be conceived without a review of her situation. Her first care was to guard the door of the staircase, for which purpose she placed against it all the furniture she could move, and she was thus employed for some time, at the end of which she had another instance how much more oppressive misfortune is to the idle than to the busy; for having then leisure to think over all the circumstances of her present afflictions, she imagined a thousand evils for futurity, and these real and ideal subjects of distress alike wounded her mind.

Thus heavily moved the hours till midnight, when she counted the sullen notes of the great clock as they rolled along the rampart unmingled with any sound except the distant footfall of a sentinel who came to relieve guard. She now thought she might venture towards the turret, and having gently opened the chamber door to examine the corridor, and to listen if any person was stirring in the castle, found all around in perfect stillness. Yet no sooner had she left the room than she perceived a light flash on the walls of the corridor, and without waiting to see by whom it was carried, she shrunk back and closed her door. No one approaching, she conjectured that it was Montoni going to pay his nightly visit to her unknown neighbour, and she determined to wait till he should have retired to his own apartment.

When the chimes had tolled another half-hour, she once more opened the door; and perceiving that no person was in the corridor, hastily crossed into a passage that led along the south side of the castle towards the staircase, whence she believed she could easily find her way to the turret. Often pausing on her way, listening apprehensively to the murmurs of the wind, and looking fearfully onward into the gloom of the long passages, she at length reached the staircase; but there her perplexity began. Two passages appeared, of which she knew not how to prefer one, and was compelled at last to decide by chance rather than by circumstances. That she entered opened first into a wide gallery, along which she passed lightly and swiftly; for the lonely aspect of the place awed her, and she started at the echo of her own steps.

On a sudden, she thought she heard a voice, and not distinguishing from whence it came, feared equally to proceed or to return. For some moments she stood in an attitude of listening expectation, shrinking almost from herself, and scarcely daring to look round her. The voice came again: but though it was now near her, terror did not allow her to judge exactly whence it proceeded. She thought, however, that it was the voice of complaint, and her belief was soon confirmed by a low moaning sound, that seemed to proceed from one of the chambers opening into the gallery. It instantly occurred to her that Madame Montoni might be there confined, and she advanced to the door to speak, but was checked by considering that she was perhaps going to commit herself to a stranger, who might discover her to Montoni; for though this person, whoever it was, seemed to be in affliction, it did not follow that he was a prisoner.

While these thoughts passed over her mind, and left her still in hesitation, the voice spoke again, and calling *Ludovico*, she then perceived it to be that of Annette; on which, no longer hesitating, she went in joy to answer her.

"*Ludovico!*" cried Annette, sobbing—"Ludovico!"

"It is I," said Emily, trying to open the door. "How came you here? Who shut you up?"

"Ludovico!" repeated Annette—"O *Ludovico!*"

"It is not *Ludovico*, it is I—*Mademoiselle Emily*."

Annette ceased sobbing, and was silent.

"If you can open the door, let me in," said Emily; "here is no person to hurt you."

"Ludovico!—O *Ludovico!*" cried Annette.

Emily now lost her patience; and the fear of being overheard

increasing, she was even nearly about to leave the door, when she considered that Annette might possibly know something of the situation of Madame Montoni, or direct her to the turret. At length she obtained a reply, though little satisfactory, to her questions; for Annette knew nothing of Madame Montoni, and only conjured Emily to tell her what was become of Ludovico. Of him she had no information to give, and she again asked who had shut Annette up.

"Ludovico," said the poor girl, "Ludovico shut me up. When I ran away from the dressing-room door to-day, I went I scarcely knew where for safety; and in this gallery here, I met Ludovico, who hurried me into this chamber, and locked me up to keep me out of harm, as he said. But he was in such a hurry himself he hardly spoke ten words; but he told me he would come back and let me out when all was quiet, and he took away the key with him. Now all these hours have passed, and I have neither seen nor heard a word of him; they have murdered him—I know they have!"

Emily suddenly remembered the wounded person whom she had seen borne into the servants' hall, and scarcely doubted that he was Ludovico; but she concealed the circumstance from Annette, and endeavoured to comfort her. Then, impatient to learn something of her aunt, she again inquired the way to the turret.

"Oh! you are not going, ma'amselle," said Annette; "for Heaven's sake, do not go and leave me here by myself!"

"Nay, Annette, you do not think I can wait in the gallery all night," replied Emily. "Direct me to the turret; in the morning I will endeavour to release you."

"O holy Mary!" exclaimed Annette, "am I to stay here by myself all night! I shall be frightened out of my senses, and I shall die of hunger; I have had nothing to eat since dinner!"

Emily could scarcely forbear smiling at the heterogeneous distresses of Annette, though she sincerely pitied them, and said what she could to soothe her. At length she obtained something like a direction to the east turret, and quitted the door, from whence, after many intricacies and perplexities, she reached the steep and winding stairs of the turret, at the foot of which she stopped to rest, and to reanimate her courage with a sense of her duty. As she surveyed this dismal place she perceived a door on the opposite side of the staircase, and anxious to know whether it would lead her to Madame Montoni, she tried to undraw the bolts which fastened it. A fresher air came to her

face, as she unclosed the door, which opened upon the east rampart, and the sudden current had nearly extinguished her light, which she now removed to a distance; and again looking out upon the obscure terrace, she perceived only the faint outline of the walls and of some towers, while above, heavy clouds borne along the wind seemed to mingle with the stars and wrap the night in thicker darkness. As she gazed, now willing to defer the moment of certainty, from which she expected only confirmation of evil, a distant footstep reminded her that she might be observed by the men on watch; and hastily closing the door, she took her lamp, and passed up the staircase. Trembling came upon her as she ascended through the gloom. To her melancholy fancy this seemed to be a place of death, and the chilling silence that reigned confirmed its character. Her spirits faltered. "Perhaps," said she, "I am come hither only to learn a dreadful truth, or to witness some horrible spectacle; I feel that my senses would not survive such an addition of horror."

The image of her aunt murdered—murdered, perhaps, by the hand of Montoni—rose to her mind; she trembled, gasped for breath—repented that she had dared to venture hither, and checked her steps. But after she had paused a few minutes, the consciousness of her duty returned as she went on. Still all was silent. At length a track of blood upon a stair caught her eye; and instantly she perceived that the wall and several other steps were stained. She paused, again struggled to support herself, and the lamp almost fell from her trembling hand. Still no sound was heard, no living being seemed to inhabit the turret: a thousand times she wished herself again in her chamber; dreaded to inquire further—dreaded to encounter some horrible spectacle—and yet could not resolve, now that she was so near the termination of her efforts, to desist from them. Having again collected courage to proceed, after ascending about half-way up the turret she came to another door; but here again she stopped in hesitation, listened for sounds within, and then summoning all her resolution, unclosed it, and entered a chamber, which, as her lamp shot its feeble rays through the darkness, seemed to exhibit only dew-stained and deserted walls. As she stood examining it, in fearful expectation of discovering the remains of her unfortunate aunt, she perceived something lying in an obscure corner of the room, and struck with a horrible conviction, she became for an instant motionless and nearly insensible. Then with a kind of desperate resolution she hurried

owards the object that excited her terror, when perceiving he clothes of some person on the floor, she caught hold of them, and found in her grasp the old uniform of a soldier, beneath which appeared a heap of pikes and other arms. Scarcely daring to trust her sight, she continued for some moments to gaze on the object of her late alarm; and then left the chamber, so much comforted and occupied by the conviction that her aunt was not there, that she was going to descend the turret without inquiring further; when on turning to do so, she observed upon some steps on the second flight an appearance of blood; and remembering that there was yet another chamber to be explored, she again followed the windings of the ascent. Still, as she descended, the track of blood glared upon the stairs.

It led her to the door of a landing-place that terminated them, but she was unable to follow it farther. Now that she was so near the sought-for certainty, she dreaded to know it even more than before, and had not fortitude sufficient to speak, or to attempt opening the door.

Having listened in vain for some sound that might confirm or destroy her fears, she at length laid her hand on the lock, and finding it fastened, called on Madame Montoni; but only a chilling silence ensued.

"She is dead!" she cried,—*"murdered! her blood is on the stairs!"*

Emily grew very faint; could support herself no longer; and had scarcely presence of mind to set down the lamp and place herself on a step.

When a recollection returned, she spoke again at the door, and again attempted to open it; and having lingered for some time without receiving any answer, or hearing any sound, she descended the turret, and, with all the swiftness her feebleness would permit, sought her own apartment.

As she turned into the corridor, the door of a chamber opened, from whence Montoni came forth; but Emily, more terrified than ever to behold him, shrunk back into the passage soon enough to escape being noticed, and heard him close the door, which she had perceived was the same she formerly observed. Having here listened to his departing steps till their faint sound was lost at a distance, she ventured to her apartment, and, securing it, once again retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the hearth. But sleep was fled from her harassed mind, to which images of horror alone occurred. She endeavoured to think it possible that Madame Montoni had not been taken to the

turret; but when she recollected the former menaces of her husband, and the terrible spirit of vengeance which he had displayed on a late occasion; when she remembered his general character, the looks of the men who had forced Madame Montoni from her apartment, and the written traces on the stairs of the turret—she could not doubt that her aunt had been carried thither, and could scarcely hope that she had not been carried to be murdered.

The grey of morning had long dawned through her casements before Emily closed her eyes in sleep; when wearied nature at length yielded her a respite from suffering.

CHAPTER XXIV

Who rears the bloody hand?

SAYER.

EMILY remained in her chamber on the following morning, without any notice from Montoni, or seeing a human being, except the armed men who sometimes passed on the terrace below. Having tasted no food since the dinner of the preceding day, extreme faintness made her feel the necessity of quitting the asylum of her apartment to obtain refreshment, and she was also very anxious to procure liberty for Annette. Willing, however, to defer venturing forth as long as possible, and considering whether she should apply to Montoni or to the compassion of some other person, her excessive anxiety concerning her aunt at length overcame her abhorrence of his presence, and she determined to go to him, and to entreat that he would suffer her to see Madame Montoni.

Meanwhile it was too certain, from the absence of Annette, that some accident had befallen Ludovico, and that she was still in confinement: Emily therefore resolved also to visit the chamber where she had spoken to her on the preceding night, and, if the poor girl was yet there, to inform Montoni of her situation.

It was near noon before she ventured from her apartment, and went first to the south gallery, whither she passed without meeting a single person or hearing a sound, except now and then the echo of a distant footstep.

It was unnecessary to call Annette, whose lamentations were audible upon the first approach to the gallery, and who, bewailing her own and Ludovico's fate, told Emily that she should certainly

be starved to death if she was not let out immediately. Emily replied that she was going to beg her release of Montoni: but the errors of hunger now yielded to those of the signor; and when Emily left her, she was loudly entreating that her place of refuge might be concealed from him.

As Emily drew near the great hall, the sounds she heard and the people she met in the passage renewed her alarm. The latter, however, were peaceable, and did not interrupt her, though they looked earnestly at her as she passed, and sometimes poke. On crossing the hall towards the cedar room, where Montoni usually sat, she perceived on the pavement fragments of swords, some tattered garments stained with blood, and almost expected to have seen among them a dead body; but from such a spectacle she was at present spared. As she approached the room, the sound of several voices issued from within; and a dread of appearing before many strangers, as well as of irritating Montoni by such an intrusion, made her pause and falter from her purpose. She looked up through the long arcades of the hall, in search of a servant who might bear a message: but no one appeared, and the urgency of what she had to request made her still linger near the door. The voices within were not in contention, though she distinguished those of several of the guests of the preceding day; but still her resolution failed whenever she would have tapped at the door, and she had determined to walk in the hall till some person should appear who might call Montoni from the room; when, as she turned from the door it was suddenly opened by himself. Emily trembled and was confused, while he almost started with surprise, and all the terrors of his countenance unfolded themselves. She forgot all she would have said, and neither inquired for her aunt, nor entreated for Annette, but stood silent and embarrassed.

After closing the door, he reproved her for a meanness of which she had not been guilty, and sternly questioned her what she had overheard; an accusation which revived her recollection so far, that she assured him she had not come thither with an intention to listen to his conversation, but to entreat his compassion for her aunt and for Annette. Montoni seemed to doubt this assertion, for he regarded her with a scrutinizing look; and the doubt evidently arose from no trifling interest. Emily then further explained herself, and concluded with entreating him to inform her where her aunt was placed, and to permit that she might visit her; but he looked upon her only with a malignant smile, which instantaneously confirmed her worst

Emily said she hoped not; but this expression of hope Annette thought implied fear, and her own increased in proportion as Emily endeavoured to encourage her. To inquiries concerning Madame Montoni she could give no satisfactory answers.

"I quite forgot to ask among the servants, *ma'amselle*," said she, "for I could think of nobody but poor Ludovico."

Annette's grief was now somewhat assuaged, and Emily sent her to make inquiries concerning her lady, of whom, however, she could obtain no intelligence, some of the people she spoke with being really ignorant of her fate, and others having probably received orders to conceal it.

This day passed with Emily in continued grief and anxiety for her aunt; but she was unmolested by any notice from Montoni; and now that Annette was liberated, she obtained food without exposing herself to danger or impertinence.

Two following days passed in the same manner, unmarked by any occurrence, during which she obtained no information of Madame Montoni. On the evening of the second, having dismissed Annette and retired to bed, *her mind became haunted* by the most dismal images, such as her long anxiety concerning her aunt suggested; and unable to forget herself for a moment or to vanquish the phantoms that tormented her, she rose from her bed, and went to one of the casements of her chamber to breathe a freer air.

All without was silent and dark, unless that could be called light which was only the faint glimmer of the stars, showing imperfectly the outline of the mountains, the western towers of the castle, and the ramparts below where a solitary sentinel was pacing. What an image of repose did this scene present! The fierce and terrible passions, too, which so often agitated the inhabitants of this edifice, seemed now hushed in sleep;—those mysterious workings that rouse the elements of man's nature into tempest—were calm. Emily's heart was not so; but her sufferings, though deep, partook of the gentle character of her mind. Hers was a silent anguish, weeping yet enduring; not the wild energy of passion, inflaming imagination, bearing down the barriers of reason, and living in a world of its own.

The air refreshed her, and she continued at the casement looking on the shadowy scene, over which the planets burned with a clear light, amid the deep blue ether, as they silently moved in their destined course. She remembered how often she had gazed on them with her dear father, how often he had pointed out their way in the heavens, and explained their laws:

and these reflections led to others, which in an almost equal degree awakened her grief and astonishment.

They brought a retrospect of all the strange and mournful events which had occurred since she lived in peace with her parents. And to Emily, who had been so tenderly educated, so tenderly loved, who once knew only goodness and happiness—to her, the late events and her present situation—in a foreign land—in a remote castle—surrounded by vice and violence, seemed more like the visions of a distempered imagination, than the circumstances of truth. She wept to think of what her parents would have suffered, could they have foreseen the events of her future life.

While she raised her streaming eyes to heaven, she observed the same planet which she had seen in Languedoc, on the night preceding her father's death, rise above the eastern towers of the castle, while she remembered the conversation which had passed concerning the probable state of departed souls; remembered also the solemn music she had heard, and to which the tenderness of her spirit had, in spite of her reason, given a superstitious meaning. At these recollections she wept again, and continued musing; when suddenly the notes of sweet music passed on the air. A superstitious dread stole over her; she stood listening for some moments in trembling expectation, and then endeavoured to re-collect her thoughts, and to reason herself into composure: but human reason cannot establish her laws on subjects lost in the obscurity of imagination, any more than the eye can ascertain the form of objects that only glimmer through the dimness of night.

Her surprise on hearing such soothing and delicious sounds, was at least justifiable; for it was long, very long, since she had listened to anything like melody. The fierce trumpet and the shrill fife were the only instruments she had heard since her arrival at Udolpho.

When her mind was somewhat more composed, she tried to ascertain from what quarter the sounds proceeded, and thought they came from below; but whether from a room of the castle, or from the terrace, she could not with certainty judge. Fear and surprise now yielded to the enchantment of a strain that floated on the silent night with the most soft and melancholy sweetness. Suddenly it seemed removed to a distance, trembled faintly, and then entirely ceased.

She continued to listen, sunk in that pleasing repose which soft music leaves on the mind—but it came no more. Upon

this strange circumstance her thoughts were long engaged; for strange it certainly was to hear music at midnight, when every inhabitant of the castle had long since retired to rest, and in a place where nothing like harmony had been heard before, probably for many years. Long suffering had made her spirits peculiarly sensible to terror, and liable to be affected by the illusions of superstition.—It now seemed to her as if her dead father had spoken to her in that strain, to inspire her with comfort and confidence on the subject which had then occupied her mind. Yet reason told her that this was a wild conjecture, and she was inclined to dismiss it; but, with the inconsistency so natural when imagination guides the thoughts, she then wavered towards a belief as wild. She remembered the singular event connected with the castle, which had given it into the possession of its present owner; and when she considered the mysterious manner in which its late possessor had disappeared, and that she had never since been heard of, her mind was impressed with a high degree of solemn awe; so that, though there appeared no clue to connect that event with the late music, she had inclined fancifully to think they had some relation to each other. At this conjecture, a sudden chillness ran through her frame; she looked fearfully upon the duskiess of her chamber, and the dead silence that prevailed there heightened to her fancy its gloomy aspect.

At length she left the casement; but her steps faltered as she approached the bed, and she stopped and looked round. The single lamp that burned in her spacious chamber was expiring; for a moment she shrunk from the darkness beyond; and then, ashamed of the weakness, which, however, she could not wholly conquer, went forward to the bed, where her mind did not soon know the soothing of sleep. She still mused on the late occurrence, and looked with anxiety to the next night, when at the same hour she determined to watch whether the music returned. "If these sounds were human," said she, "I shall probably hear them again."

END OF VOL. I